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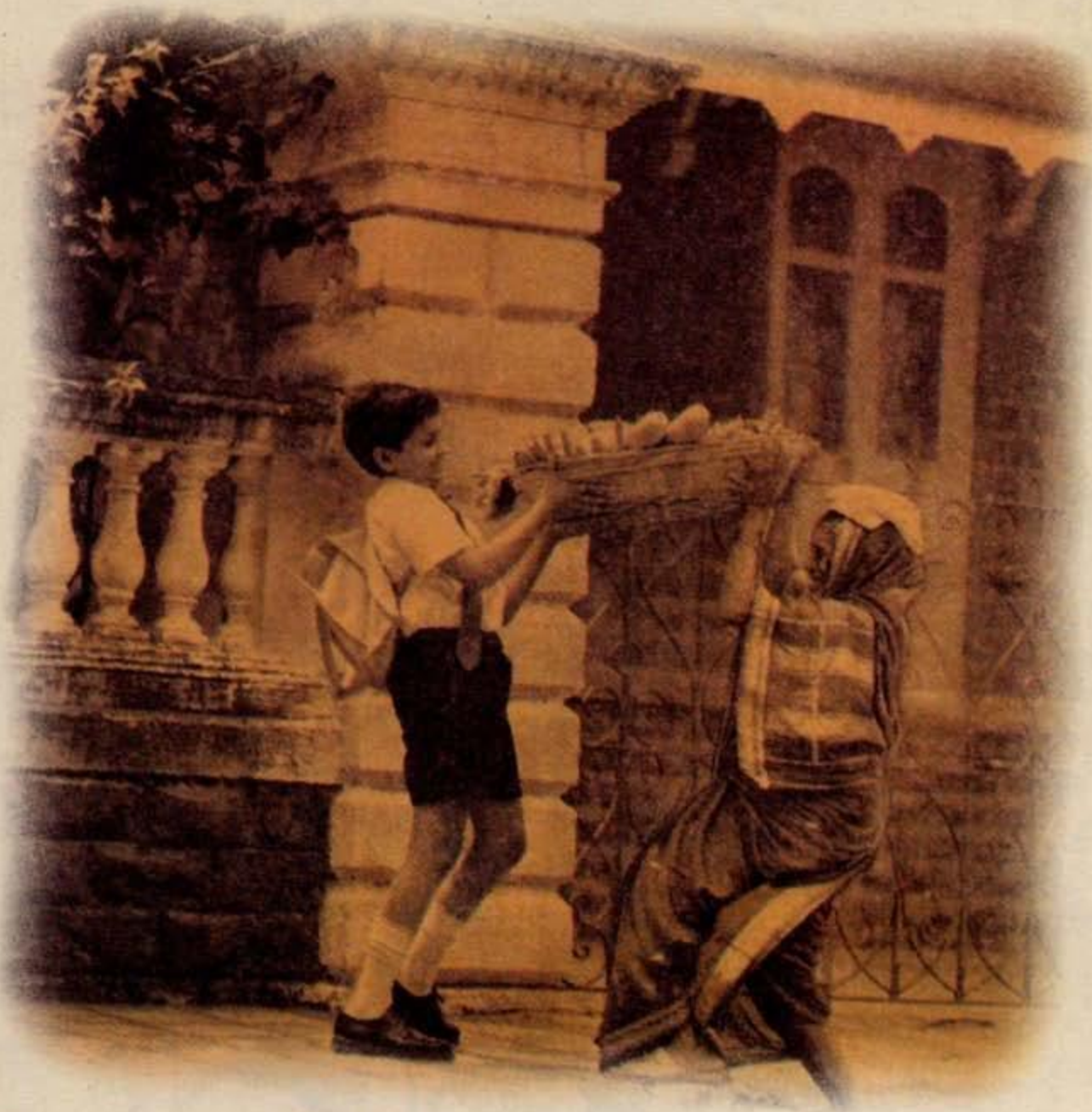


Turn to Page 11
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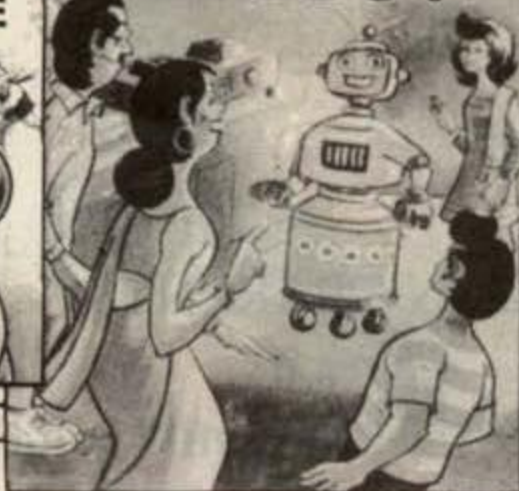
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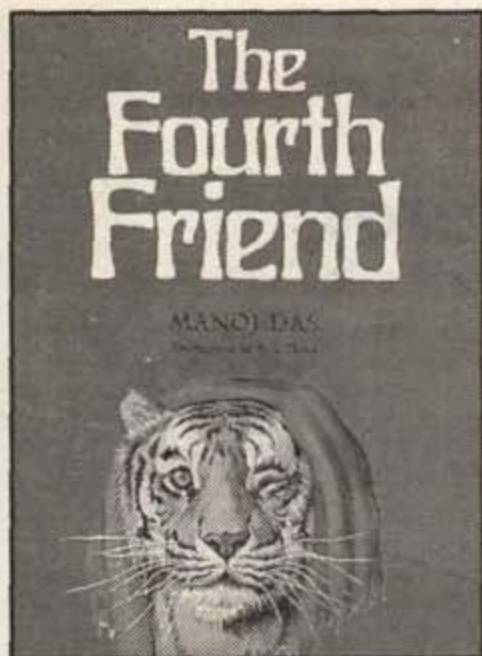
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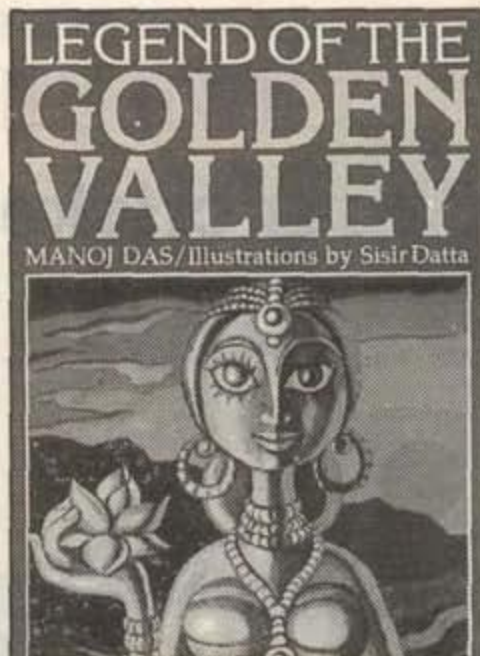
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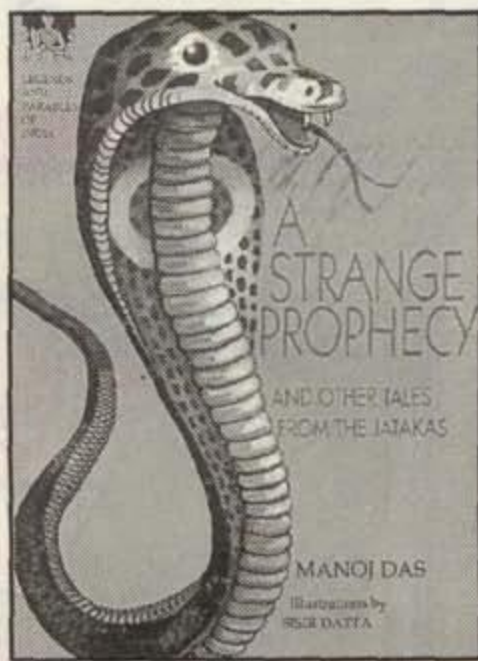
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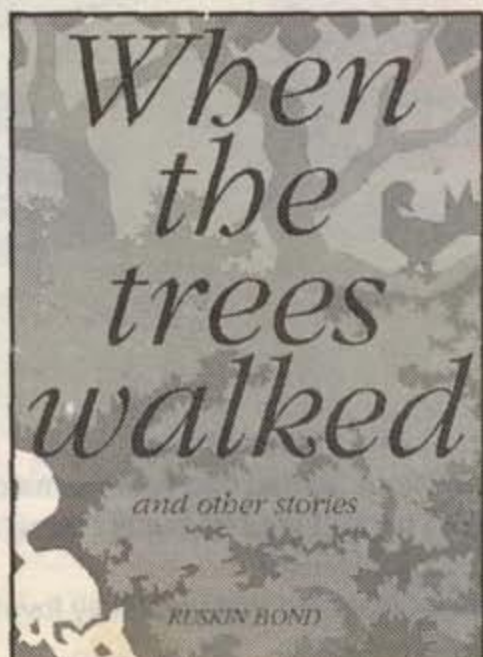
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CHANDAMAMA

CONTENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Vol. 27 DECEMBER 1996 No. 6

Stories :

Saga Of Ashoka	
The Great - 11	... Page 11
Drip Drip Drip And A Hero	... Page 23
Stories From	
Mahabharata - 26	... Page 28
Stories Of Emperor	
Pulakesan - 2	... Page 37
Where To Hit The Dog	... Page 41
How The Man And The Genie	
Grew Wiser	... Page 45
Over-ambition	... Page 53
The Value of Knowledge	... Page 62

Picture Stories :

Immortal Friendship - 8	... Page 19
-------------------------	-------------

Chandamama Pull-Out :

Coastal Journeys - 15	...Page 33
-----------------------	------------

Features :

Food For All	... Page 10
Towards Better English	... Page 18
News Flash	... Page 22
Chandamama	
Supplement - 98	... Page 42
Golden Hour - 9	... Page 49
Sports Snippets	... Page 61

NEXT ISSUE

Vol.27 JANUARY 1997 No. 7

THE GREAT EXPEDITION: After ensuring the throne for himself, Emperor Ashoka decides to expand the glorious Maurya empire. The one country which his father or grandfather had not tried to conquer was Kalinga. Ashoka must prove his might by annexing that proud and prosperous nation. He organises a vast army.

In **MAHABHARATA**, Kichaka, the arrogant brother-in-law of King Virata, with whom the Pandavas have taken shelter, is attracted towards Draupadi. As he insults her, Bhima chalks out a plan to teach him a lesson!

TIT FOR TAT: Kasinath wants to go to Kantapura. He can very well go on foot, but the narrow path is through a jungle. No, he would go by a horse-cart. Bangara owns a cart, but he would take it out only if there are four paying passengers. Kasinath does not mind the company of three passengers. Inside the cart, he stretches his legs which touch a box belonging to one of the strangers. He is angry and rebukes Kasinath, who apologises when he is told that the box contains an idol. He then leans on the box. The owner is angry once again. The box contains items made of glass. A confrontation between the two is inevitable.

COASTAL JOURNEYS takes you further along the Coromandel Coast, while artist Bujjai begins yet another comics serial, and **GOLDEN HOUR** provides tickling questions for you to answer.





Founder: CHAKRAPANI

Controlling Editor : NAGI REDDI

Protecting Children's Rights

Yet another Children's Day has come and gone. As usual, there were rallies by children, all sorts of competitions for them and, of course, picnics and other kinds of outings and merry-making to make them happy. The question is—should all these exercises be confined to just one day, to justify setting apart a day and calling it Children's Day?

Does this mean that on other days, children can be neglected, left to fend for themselves? Some six or seven years ago, the world woke up because someone somewhere realised that children, like adults, have their own rights. The United Nations held a special Convention on the Rights of the Child and prompted every member-nation to affix its stamp of approval and solemn decision to implement the Convention recommendations.

In the light of this, the demand made by a representative from India in the U.N. Assembly a month ago assumes great significance. An Indian member of parliament, speaking at the Assembly, said the U.N. should convene another special session to find out which nations have by now implemented how many of the recommendations made by the 1989 Convention. He went a step further by suggesting that such special assemblies should be held every five years to monitor the progress made in this direction.

What is the state of affairs in India? Two of the most fundamental rights of the child are the Right to Education and the Right to be free from compulsory labour. According to an unofficial estimate, nearly 10 million children in India *do not* go to school.

If within the country our own laws are not adequately effective, how can a global organisation take proper protective measures?

FOOD FOR ALL

That was the slogan for the World Food Summit held in Rome for five days in the middle of November. It was a summit, in the sense nearly 190 countries were participating, with some of them sending in their Presidents, another 40 odd sending in their Prime Ministers, and the rest of the nations being represented mostly by their ministers. There was no difference of opinion among them that hunger should be wiped out from the world, though the target date for such a state of affairs remained a matter of opinion, with our own Prime Minister, Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda, asserting that there should not be a single human being going hungry on the 1st of January, 2000 A.D. That gives the world leaders just three years to put their solemn statement to practice.

Why should people go hungry? Maybe, food production in the world is not sufficient to feed all mouths; or perhaps the available food material does not reach the people in time or in sufficient quantities; or perhaps a large chunk of what is produced goes waste or is not fit for consumption. Take a look at our own kitchen as well as dining table. Have you noticed how much food is wasted every day? When food is prepared, great care has to be taken to cook only that much quantity required by the inmates of the house. If more has been cooked, the extra quantity can be judiciously spared and shared with those who do not have enough to eat or anything at all to eat.

Not much different is the scene in hotels, on trains, on board airplanes and other eating places. Hotels have the ten-

dency to present a variety of items all of which many cannot or do not eat, and they go waste. Instances are not rare when countries which have excess production of wheat, corn, and similar cereals throw away a major part of it into the sea.

India has a public distribution system, which is taken advantage of by a majority of the population, especially those below the poverty line. But often, what is distributed is not fit for human consumption. Naturally, a lot goes waste.

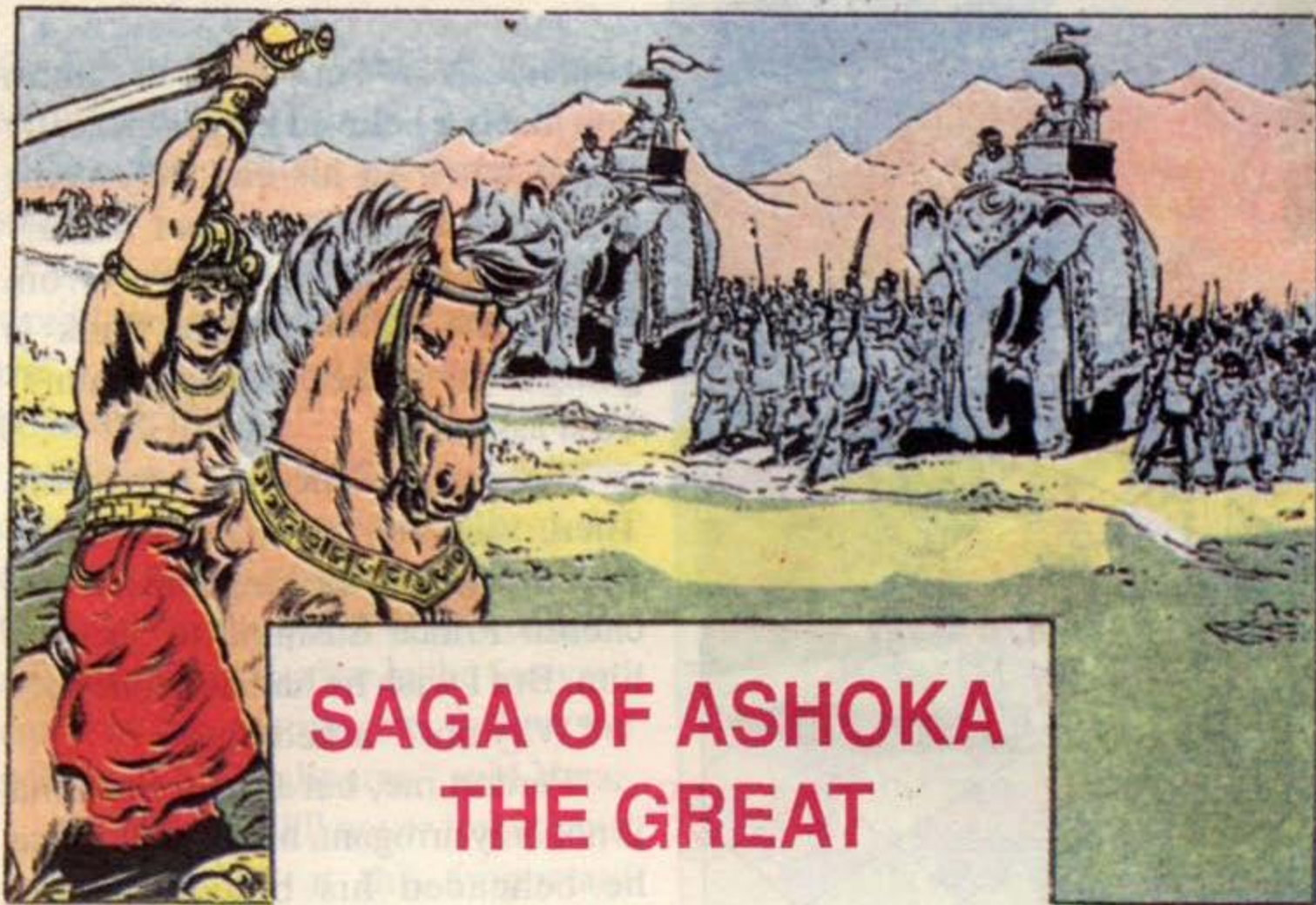
The Rome summit affirmed that it is the fundamental right of all people to be free from hunger.

It was stated that there are 840,000,000 people in the world today who suffer the pangs of hunger. The summit declared that this number would be reduced

to half in the next twenty years. An earlier summit 22 years ago had taken an almost similar decision. But millions and millions of people went without a morsel of food, resulting in starvation deaths. The question might be asked: when can the remaining 420,000,000 people hope to get a square meal every day?

It is said that the Rome Declaration on Food Security and the Plan of Action were not made mandatory on the nations who attended the summit. That calls for action on the part of people themselves. Let each one of us take a decision not to waste food and spare whatever we can for the 'have-nots'. That way, we can ensure that there is enough food for all.





SAGA OF ASHOKA THE GREAT

(The story so far: King Vindusara of Magadha is critically ill at his capital, Pataliputra. His eldest son, Sushima, is away in Taxila. The other aspirant to the throne, Ashoka, is in Ujjain. The royal court sends messengers to both the princes to return to Pataliputra. Much will depend on who reaches first. Ashoka's dear friend has sent two dancing girls to Sushima. They would try to delay Sushima's journey. They were the same girls whom Sushima had once employed to kill Ashoka.)

People in the city of Pataliputra were sad and anxious—sad because of the serious illness of the king, anxious because they were not sure who would succeed to the throne. They knew that Prince Sushima was cruel and lazy. They carried good impressions of Prince Ashoka, but they were afraid it might not be easy for him to occupy the throne. They stood in groups in the bazars or in front of the temples, talking and gossiping.

Prince Ashoka was getting ready to set out for Pataliputra. Captains of

the battalions of his army had been summoned. Yasa addressed them.

“Dear friends,” he said, “the moment of destiny has struck for all of us, rather for the entire Magadha empire. The question that looms large is, whether we should refrain from taking any risk and allow the empire built by the great Chandragupta Maurya to fall into pieces, or act decisively and save it.”

“No doubt, we should do our best to save it. We've full faith in our master Prince Ashoka and you, his worthy friend. But, please tell us what





threatens the empire—who its enemy is,” said the seniormost captain, the commander of all the battalions in Ujjain.

“My friends, many of you have fought enemies from outside the empire. There are formidable enemies within the empire; they’re much more dangerous. You can face the external enemies with courage alone, but along with courage, you need conviction to confront and crush the internal enemy,” said Yasa.

“Yasa, don’t we look upon you as our leader? Give us the conviction, and we’ll be at your command,” said the commander.

“I can’t give you any amount of conviction. You’ve to find it within

yourself. Now I’m pained to inform you that our beloved king is critically ill, so much so his end may come any moment, if it has not already come since my departure from Pataliputra. Who do you think is going to adorn the throne after him?” Yasa asked.

There was silence for a moment. Then, said the commander, “From what I’ve heard, the king himself had chosen Prince Sushima to succeed him. But I wish he had not done so!”

“Why not?” asked Yasa.

“Pardon me, but Prince Sushima is not only arrogant, but foolish. Once he beheaded his bodyguard, an excellent soldier provided to him by me, because a flying bird had soiled his turban! I shudder to think of such a man as our king!” said the commander.

“Then, you must do everything within your powers to see that he does not become the king. I hate to mince words. Don’t you think Prince Ashoka is the right candidate for the throne?” asked Yasa.

“Undoubtedly!” said the commander, and all the captains echoed him enthusiastically.

“Very good. Now, our legitimate wish alone is not sufficient to put him on the throne. We may have to pave the way there for him with our swords. There are risks in it. Are you prepared to take them?”

“We’re prepared to lay our lives



for Prince Ahoka,” said the captains in one voice.

Just then Ashoka appeared on the scene.

“We greet Prince Ashoka, the would-be emperor of Magadha!” said the commander. All the captains bowed to him.

“There's no time to lose. I ask the commander to decide which of the captains should remain here to defend the castle in the event of any danger. All others must gather in the foreyard early in the morning to follow the prince — to Pataliputra,” said Yasa.

“My friends, I'll never forget your support to me at this important juncture in the life of our illustrious grandfather's empire,” said Ashoka.



“The king, my lord, is no more!”

Prince Sushima raised his head with indignation. He was drinking wine in the company of two Greek merchants. On the low round table between them rested a dazzling diamond.

“Do you think you deserve this diamond as your reward for carrying this news to me? Who permitted you to come in?” The prince was apparently angry that he was disturbed.

“You permitted, my lord, when I told you that he had been despatched by the prime minister to give you some urgent news!” Sushima's faithful personal attendant, Subahu,



reminded him.

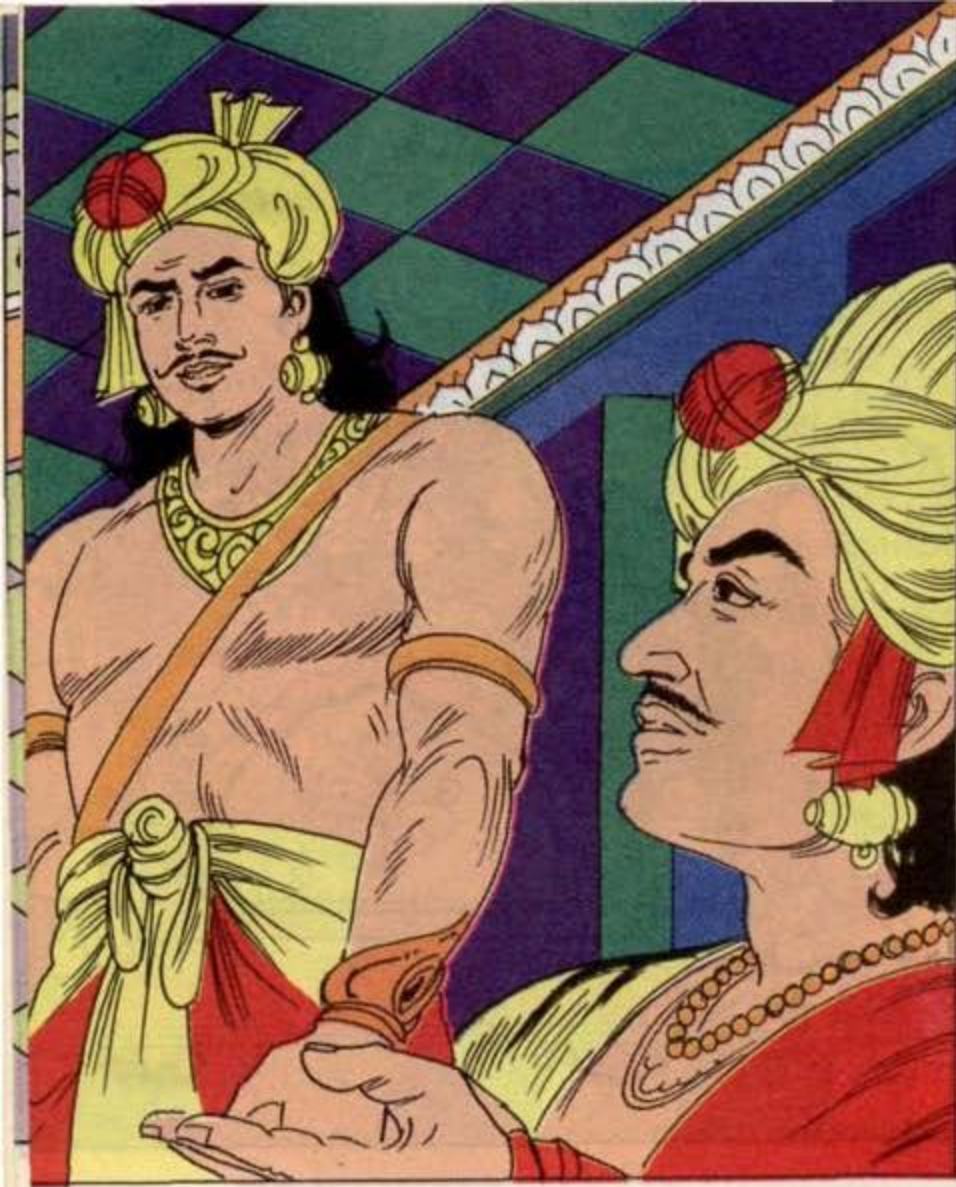
The prince seemed to get over his intoxication. He straightened up. “Is it true? Is our father dead?” he demanded, goggling his eyes.

“He is, my lord. Here's the message from the Prime Minister.”

“Prime Minister Khallataka? The very first thing I propose to do after my coronation is to drown that chap in the nearest lake with water enough,” said Prince Sushima as he stood up. Then, looking at the Greek merchants, he said, “We'll meet later!”

The two merchants looked wistfully at the diamond. They had brought the precious stuff as a gift for the prince in order to obtain some





special right to trade in the Taxila region. But the order to that effect had not been passed. How much they wished they could take back the diamond!

The prince picked up the diamond. "Bring a few more like this and meet me at Pataliputra. I'll grant you the rights you want over the whole of Magadha, not Taxila alone!" He laughed. "You know what I mean, don't you?" he asked with a twinkle in his eyes.

"We wish you a smooth ascent to the throne, O Prince!" said the merchants, as they took leave of him.

"Now I must get ready to start for Pataliputra. Subahu, call our captains! I don't know whether to

proceed with a few bodyguards alone or with an army."

"With an army, of course!"

Sushima looked with some surprise at the speaker, who had just come in. He was his chief spy, a clever and cunning man.

"Why are you gasping for breath?" asked Sushima.

"I've just returned from Pataliputra. The report I bring is ominous. Prince Ashoka is about to reach the capital!"

"Don't speak nonsense! Your Prince Ashoka is reduced to a sackful of worthless garbage. He is rotting in his bed in Ujjain!"

"My lord, when I last heard of him, he was fast galloping towards the capital — and with an army as smart as a pack of hounds!"

"Are you sure?"

"If I prove wrong, kick me into the nearest lake along with Khallataka. But you won't be in a position to do anything like that unless you start for the capital at once!"

"But..."

Sushima looked at Subahu, leaving his statement incomplete.

"Yes, my lord?" Subahu grew alert.

"Where are those ladies from Ujjain? Curse on my memory, I've forgotten their names!"

"Which ladies, my lord? Those dancing girls who met you

yesterday?"

"That's right. They assured me that the stupid Ashoka lay paralysed!"

"I assure you, Ashoka is neither stupid nor paralysed!" said the spy.

"How dare you contradict me, you audacious fellow? What's Ashoka if not stupid?" shouted Sushima.

"My lord, I'm helpless if you don't want to believe me. You paid me for a job and I've done it faithfully. Let me leave!"

"No!" roared Sushima. "I must bring you face to face with those ladies. Subahu! Bring them to my presence."

"But where are they, my lord?"

"How do I know where they are? They received a reward from me and promised to meet me again. They must be somewhere in Taxila! Can't

our men search them out?"

Another man came in and greeted Sushima. He was Sushima's spy in Ujjain.

"Good you came. Surely, you're not going to tell me that Ashoka is on his way to Pataliputra!" Sushima looked at him with anxiety writ large on his face.

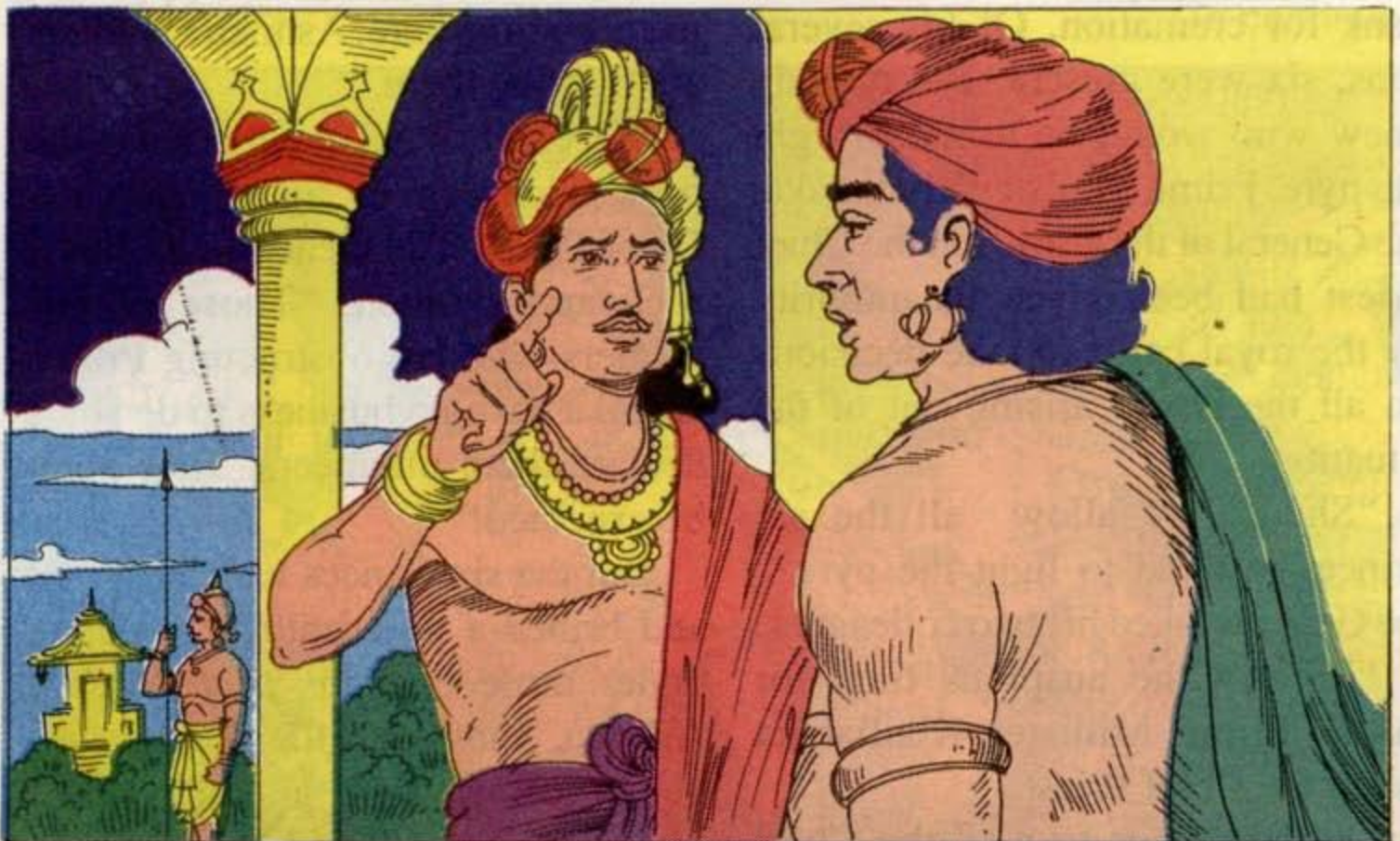
"So, my lord seems to have already got the news!"

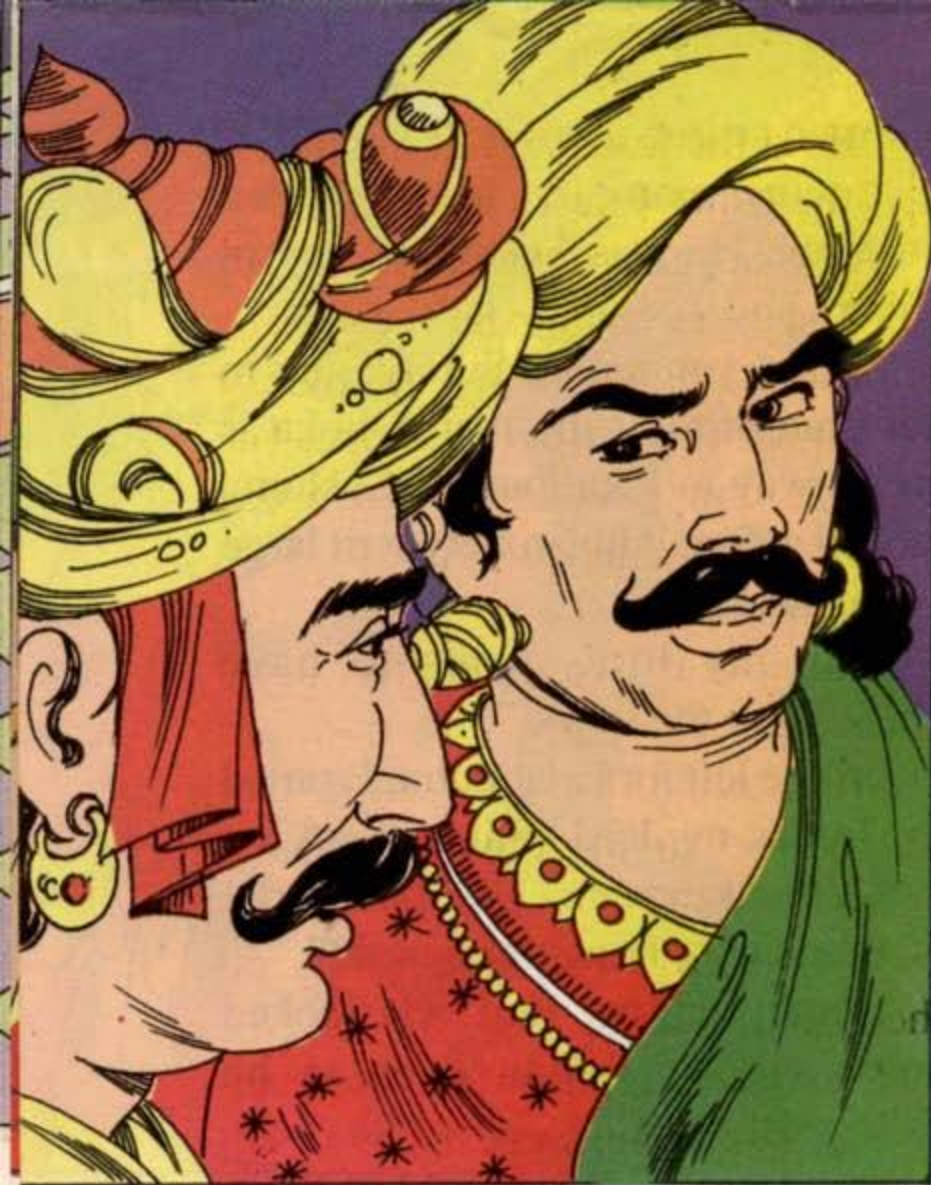
"As he left for Pataliputra, I started for Taxila, my lord," said the spy.

"A thousand curses on those girls! Is Ashoka not lying paralysed?"

"Paralysed, my lord? He looked more vigorous than ever as he galloped!"

"Shut up! Now, get hold of those treacherous girls. I'll tear them into shreds. I'll burn one of them alive and throttle the other.





The sun had just set. The king's body had been brought to the riverbank for cremation. Of his several sons, six were present. But nobody knew who would be asked to light the pyre. Prime Minister Khallataka, the General of the army, and the Chief Priest had been given the authority by the royal court to take decisions on all the issues arising out of the situation.

"Should we allow all the six princes at hand to light the pyre?" the General asked his two colleagues.

"When's the auspicious time for that?" Prime Minister Khallataka asked the Chief Priest.

"Still an hour to go," the Chief

Priest replied.

"My information is, Prince Ashoka is approaching the city. Being the seniormost prince next to Sushima, it'll be his right to light the pyre. Am I right?" the Prime Minister asked the Chief Priest.

"Right," replied the Chief Priest.

"Here comes Prince Ashoka!" joyously shouted some people in the crowd.

"Long live Prince Ashoka!" shouted some others.

At once the six princes disappeared from the scene. Next moment, outside the crowd, shouts and yells were heard.

"What's that?" asked the surprised Prime Minister.

A nobleman came rushing. "Some of the soldiers, at the behest of the six princes, are trying to stop Ashoka from coming here. Ashoka's soldiers are fighting them."

"O God! What a time have the princes chosen to fight!" said the Chief Priest. The General climbed a rock and shouted, "Those of our soldiers who are obstructing Prince Ashoka have no business to do so! I declare them mutineers. They shall be executed!"

But the six princes had conspired and bribed a few captains. Soldiers under those captains tried to stop Ashoka, knowing little that he was being followed by a much larger army.

“Kill all those who are trying to kill Prince Ashoka!” shouted Yasa.

“I command our loyal soldiers to protect Prince Ashoka!” shouted the General of the army.

“I knew that those six princes were expecting Sushima. They’re extremely hostile to Ashoka. But I hadn’t imagined that they would take such an extreme violent step on such a solemn occasion!” said the Prime Minister.

“The auspicious time is now for the cremation. I don’t know what to do.”

Through the crowd Ashoka elbowed his way, looking tired and dusty.

“Welcome O Prince. It’s most unfortunate that you should face such a nasty situation. It’s fortunate that you’ve emerged unscathed,” said the Prime Minister.

“Hold the torch and lit the pyre!” was the Chief Priest’s instruction.

Ashoka performed the rite.

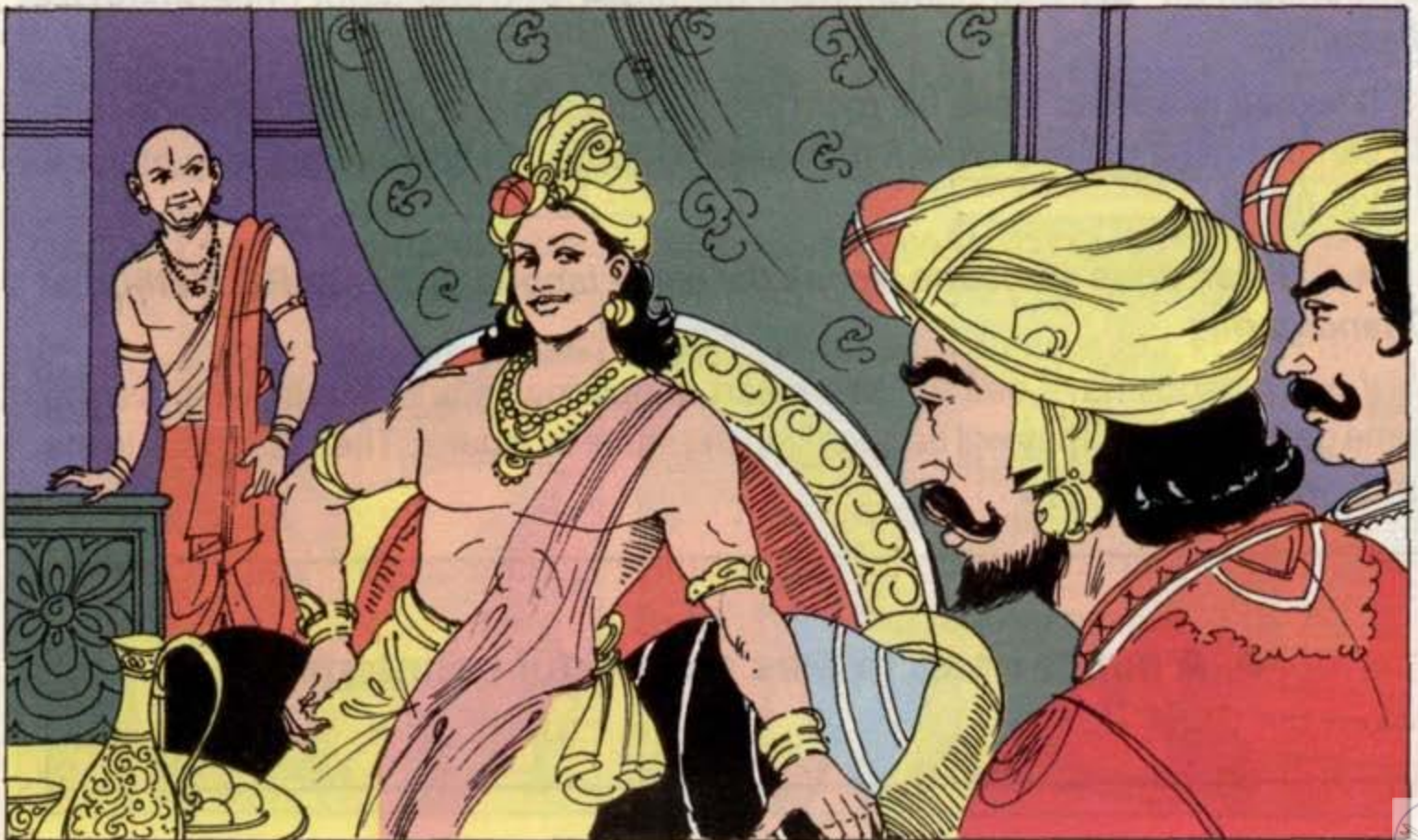
“The throne cannot lie vacant. The prince who lights the funeral pyre is the natural choice for the throne. The rites for your ascension to the throne must be performed tonight,” said the Prime Minister.

“I know. I’ll assume the royal authority. But the coronation can wait. I must be sure that I’m acceptable to all the nobles and chieftains.”

“It’s noble of you to say so,” said the Prime Minister.

It took another hour for all to learn that all those who were trying to kill Ashoka had been killed. Among them were the six princes. The palace became gloomy, the queens and their maids wailing aloud.

(To continue)



Cot has a wrong side, too!

"You seem to have got up on the wrong side" - was the remark Triloknath Chatterjee of Dum Dum heard from his teacher. But his cot is placed next to the wall, and every day he gets up only on one side. How come, then the cot has a wrong side, suddenly? he wonders.

The teacher must have found the teen-ager peevish the whole day. At times, the boy was also tending to turn bad-tempered. The teacher tolerated everything, as otherwise Trilok, as he affectionately calls him, is a well-behaved boy. That day was an exception, and the teacher wanted to say that idiomatically. Trilok must have understood what the teacher meant. But we have to presume that, to prevent a repetition of his experience, he casually drew his cot into the middle of the room, so that it has two sides, and he can always choose the right side!

★ ***S.P. Veeraraghavan, of Nellore, asks: What is meant by the expression "Bob's your uncle"?***

If someone were to say, "You go and ask for the job, and he remembers your name, and Bob's your uncle," it only means that everything is perfect and will go smooth. The expression is a slang.

★ ***Malini Doraiswami, of Virudhunagar, came across the expression "do a moonlight flit" in a publication from the U.S.A. and could not understand its meaning.***

If someone were to leave his room in the lodge in the night without paying rent, he can be stated to have done a moonlight flit! But such adventurers may prefer a darker night!

★ ***When does someone 'speak the same language'? asks P.D.Mathur, of Chandigarh.***

If two persons have had the same sort of upbringing and, therefore, have the same general ideas, they will be speaking the same language. They will speak in the same wavelength!

● **A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance**

IMMORTAL FRIENDSHIP - 8

By BUJJAI

PEOPLE ATTACK
THE KING'S MEN.



MEANWHILE,
KING
VIJAYAKIRTHI'S
SOLDIERS ALSO
ARRIVE IN DIS-
GUISE TO SAVE
SUMITRA.



PEOPLE
UNCHAIN
SUMITRA AND
SINGHI DORA.



KING
PRACHANDA
REALISES
THAT HIS
PLAN HAS
FLOPPED.



Brother Singhi! Prachanda is running
away! Give me that sword! And, you
keep an eye on the minister!



SUMITRA
CATCHES
HOLD OF
THE
HANGING
ROPE
AND ...



PRACHANDA ALSO
DRAWS HIS SWORD.



SUMITRA
STOPS
PRACHANDA.
SWORD
FIGHT
ENSUES.



Ay! Hey!

Not with words, but with this
sword I'll teach you a lesson!



MEANWHILE,
SINGHI
DORA CON-
FRONTS THE
ESCAPING
MINISTER.



Coward! Stop!

You, fox! Your game has flopped!

Shut up!



You're the cause for this
disaster! I'll kill you!

You can't!



KING VIJAYAKIRTHI'S MEN
JOIN HANDS WITH THE EN-
RAGED PEOPLE IN ATTACK-
ING PRACHANDA'S GUARDS.



MEANWHILE...

I won't kill you!
(Let the people decide
your fate!)



MEANWHILE...

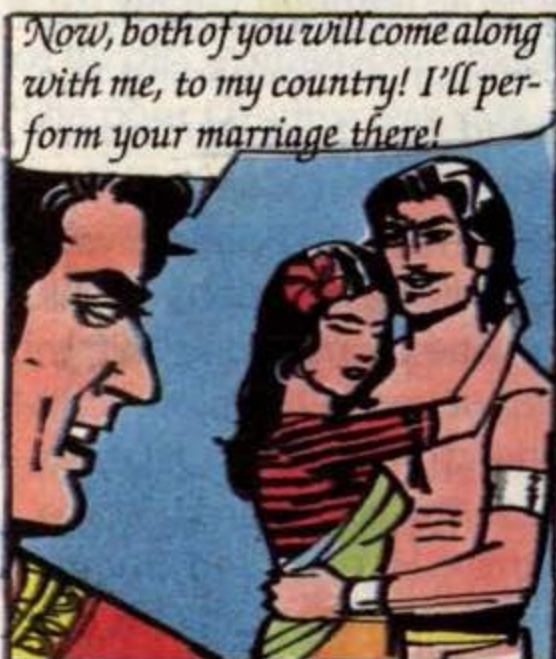
Brother! Don't kill him!



People will decide the fate of
the king and the minister!



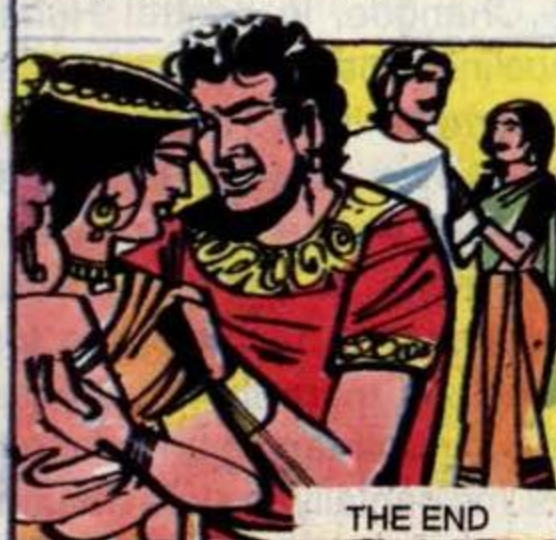
- LEARNING IS A TREASURE WHICH ACCOMPANIES ITS OWNER EVERYWHERE



SINGHI DORA AND NEELA GO WITH SUMITRA TO HIS COUNTRY.



SUMITRA REJOINS HIS WIFE AND SON. ALL ARE HAPPY!



● WHEN MONEY SPEAKS TRUTH IS SILENT



NEWS FLASH

To teach peace

We have heard of institutions which train people how to fight and mould soldiers out of them. Nobody seems to have thought of the need to 'teach' peace – rather, teach people to resolve conflicts, to avoid confrontation of any kind, and generally to live in peace. Now comes a proposal to establish a peace university. A project called the United Earth Peace University – the first of its kind in the world – is slowly taking shape in *India*! The place chosen to establish the university is the small town of Alandi, near Pune, in Maharashtra. It is famous as the resting place of the philosopher-saint, Jnaneshwar. The foundation-stone of the University will be laid before the New Year. The project is estimated to cost nearly 30,000,000 U.S. dollars.

Wall of poetry

Changde, in central Hunan province in China, needs an anti-flood embankment. It is to build a thick, strong wall 2.5 km long. But the city does not want the wall to serve only as an embankment to prevent floods. So, it proposes to decorate the inside by inscribing more than a thousand poems by both ancient and modern poets. Incidentally, the late Chairman Mao Zedong, who ruled China from 1949 to 1976, was born 100 km south-east of Changde. And Mao is considered one of China's great modern poets.

Smoke put to good use

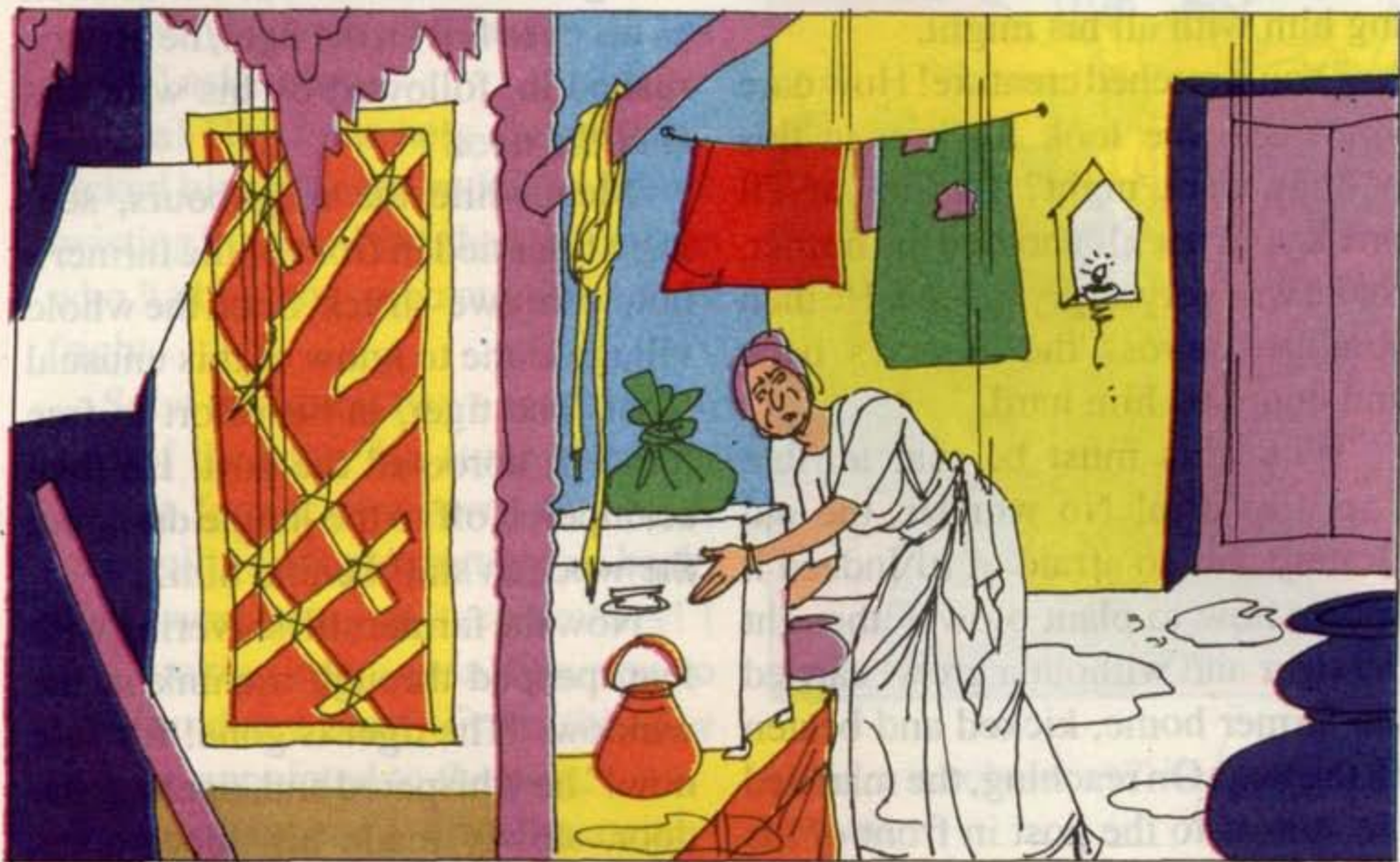
When garbage is put to the incinerator, a lot of energy in the shape of fire and smoke is generated, all of which goes waste. Taiwan has found a way to use this energy. It is building a restaurant on top of the garbage incinerator in Peiton, which has a chimney 150 metres tall. The two-storey revolving restaurant will be 120 metres above the ground. The top floor will be used as a viewing platform, and it will have 12 binoculars. The restaurant will have 100 seats. When it is commissioned, it will be the world's first restaurant located on top of an incinerator.

Caves as homes

When cave-dwellers in China – and there are four million of them still – are preferring to go to towns in search of jobs and to live in homes built of bricks, the authorities in that country have begun a scheme of converting the caves vacated by them to "sweet homes", by introducing modern conveniences, in the hope that people who are fed up of living in cubby holes called flats will be prompted to shift to these modern caves. A team of architects are working on the caves in Loess plateau, in northwest China. Some caves in Gansu, Henan, and Shansi provinces are even now ready for occupation. These cave buildings have attracted the attention of international architects, because they conserve energy and protect the environment.



DRIP DRIP DRIP AND A HERO



It was a stormy night. A tiger looking for shelter huddled close to the wall of an old woman's tumble-down hut. The poor Granny was rather upset as the rain came in through the roof and fell drip drip drip all over her little dwelling. So she went on pushing and dragging her cot, utensils, and other belongings from one corner to another to keep them out of the rain. At times, she even shoved things angrily against the mud and bamboo wall which then shook with the impact.

The tiger, who was all this while wondering what this great hullabaloo

could be, suddenly felt the wall shake and Granny shout in disgust, "Oh! It's killing me, this drip drip drip. It's much less frightful to put up with a tiger or a lion than with this drip drip drip!"

The tiger then hearing her dragging her things about the room again, nervously muttered to himself, 'Strange! If this drip, drip, drip frightens the old Granny more than me or even a lion, it must be a dreadful creature.'

Just then an absent-minded farmer was passing by looking for his miss-

ing donkey. In the flash of lightning he saw an animal crouching against the wall of a hut. He mistook it for his lost pet. Hurrying up to him he pulled his ears and began beating and kicking him with all his might.

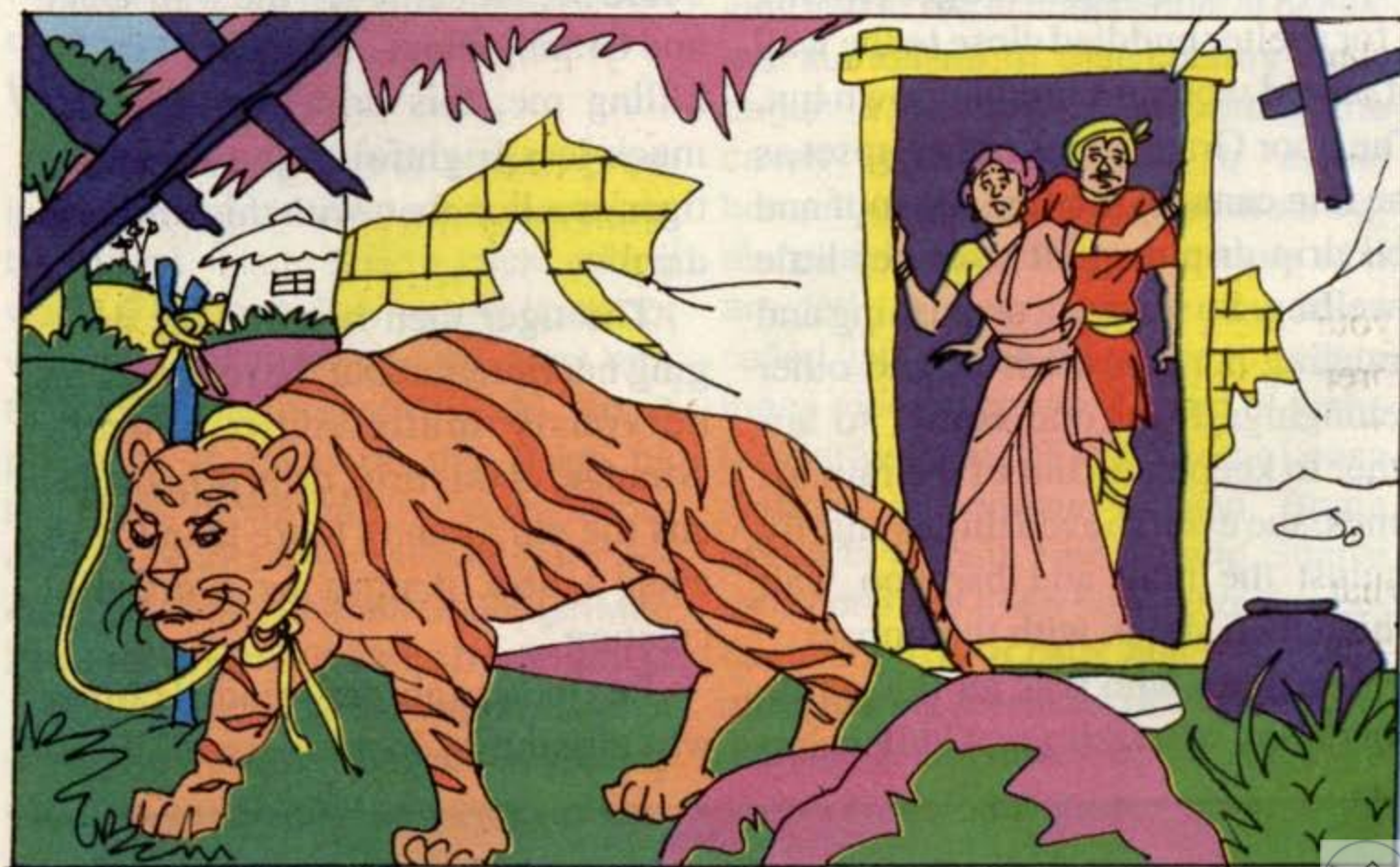
"You wretched creature! How dare you make me look for you in this pouring dark night? Get up or I'll break your neck!" shouted the farmer, for he was very angry indeed. He then straddled across the animal's back and thumped him hard.

'Why, this must be that terrible drip drip drip! No wonder, the old Granny was so afraid of it! Indeed it knows how to plant blows!' thought the tiger and without a growl carried the farmer home, kicked and beaten all the way. On reaching, the man tied the animal to the post in front of his hut and went to bed.

The next morning, after the rains had subsided, when the farmer's wife saw the tiger tied in place of their donkey, she screamed in terror. That brought her husband out but as soon as his eyes fell on the tiger, he at once rushed in, followed by his wife and shut the door.

Meanwhile the neighbours, seeing a tiger tied in front of the farmer's hut, were awe-struck. Soon the whole village came to know of this unusual sight. The tiger, in his effort to free himself, uprooted the post. He then scampered off to the jungle dragging the wooden staff behind him.

Now the farmer still shivering with fear, peeped through a chink in the window. "The tiger is gone! It's safe now!" he whispered and, opening the door, slowly made his appearance. The villagers gathered around him



and asked about his heroic exploits. How could he single-handed catch the tiger and tie it to the post?

"Ha ha!!" the farmer laughed and made some vague gestures.

"Did you really beat and kick the tiger?" asked one.

"Ha! Ha! I not only slapped and kicked him but even rode him home, twisting his ears!" laughed the farmer who had by now recovered from his fright.

Soon this great news reached the ears of the king. He summoned the valiant farmer, honoured him with many gifts and said, patting his back, "I've never heard of such bravery! I was looking for a man like you to command my army. From this day you are appointed to the post."

It so happened that the neighbouring realm, which long had some conflicts with this one, suddenly declared war and its troops were already at the borders, all set to invade the kingdom any moment. The farmer was called and his ruler ordered him, "Now the time has come to prove your great valour once again! Go, prepare yourself and by daybreak tomorrow you must proceed to meet the enemy."

"Ye..es, Your Majesty!" was all that the farmer could mumble, his heart pounding with fear.

He did not get a wink of sleep in the night. 'I don't even know how to ride a horse! How then can I com-



mand a whole army?' he lamented in despair.

"Don't you worry, all will be well!" consoled his wife.

The following day, the king sent a spirited and powerful black stallion for his brave commander. The poor farmer was lifted up onto the saddle. His wife fetched a strong rope and firmly tied him to the horse, legs to the stirrups, his waist and neck to the horse's body, neck and tail.

When the animal felt the ropes around him, he suddenly began to rear up and galloped off like a flash of lightning, the great commander desperately clutching at its manes. They sped over hedges, over ditches, and over streams; they sped over rocks,



and over plains, and at last they came in sight of the enemy camp.

"Oh! No! They're going to make mincemeat out of me!" cried the farmer.

Suddenly, he saw the aerial roots of a banyan tree hanging down within his reach. He stretched out his hands and grabbed them in a desperate bid to free himself from the horse. Alas, his good wife had tied him tightly and securely indeed! As the horse shot past, the roots along with some branches broke down. The brave commander now rode on towards the enemy camp holding a laurel of leaves and roots around him, shouting at the top of his voice, in helpless fright.

When the enemy soldiers saw a

fierce-looking man with uprooted branches in his hands dashing towards them on a spirited black charger, they had the shock of their lives.

"It's a demon coming as the advance guard!" cried a soldier.

"Indeed, here comes a supernatural being on a supernatural horse, uprooting the very trees in his rage!" shouted a second.

"The enemy king has surely an army of ferocious giants!" added the third.

"Let's all flee," yelled another. "For, if they have such men as this demon, then we'll all soon be crushed!"

"Yes, let's all run for our lives!" echoed the others.

Just as the poor farmer reached the camp, the ropes that held him to the horse snapped and he collapsed onto the ground in a faint. The horse stood still, too tired perhaps to go further after his breathtaking run. On returning to his senses, the farmer found to his utter astonishment the whole camp completely deserted with no sign whatsoever of a living soul. He got up, still bewildered, and leading the horse by the reins trod his weary way homewards.

The king's army, who had later followed to join their commander-in-chief, met him returning to the capital.

"The enemy has fled like frightened little mice," he informed them with a jubilant smile.

Some soldiers rode to the camp site to verify for themselves. Indeed, it lay empty with no sign of any combat. Triumphantly, they hurried to the city and gave the good tidings to their king.

Soon the farmer arrived in a big procession. Since the commander still walked leading the stallion, the others too did the same. Alas, what could he do, he didn't even know how to get up onto the horse's back. The king himself came down into the streets to welcome the hero amidst great applause.

"What? You walk back home leading your horse instead of riding it! That, too, after having scared away a whole army single-handed! Indeed, you're as brave as you're modest! What an extraordinary man!" sighed

the king in delight. "Now, tell me, my friend, what reward can I give you? I promise to grant whatever is your wish!"

"My lord, allow me to continue in my hamlet near the forest. Appoint someone else as your commander!" prayed the farmer.

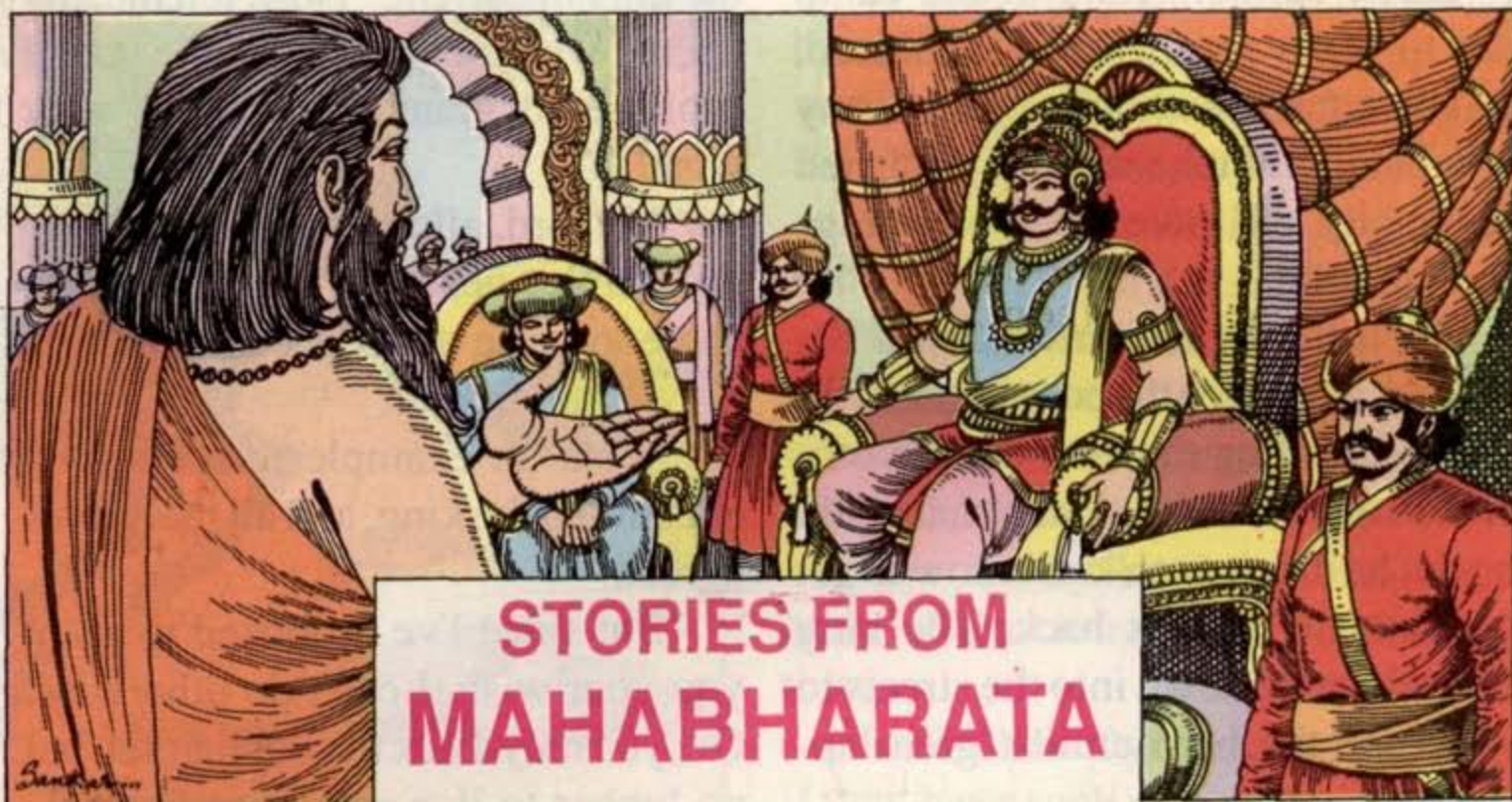
"What an example in modesty!" exclaimed the king, and all the nobles agreed.

"But since I've promised to grant you your wish, I can't do otherwise. Go, you may, back to your hamlet, but no longer to live as a poor farmer!" announced the king, and he granted the farmer a landed estate and rewarded him with a boxful of gold.

"Thank God!" the farmer told his wife, with a twinkle in his eyes.

— Retold by Anup Kishore Das





STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

The story so far...

The Pandava Princes having completed their twelve years of exile now have to remain in total hiding for a further year. They decide to seek service at the court of King Virata, the ruler of Matsya. Yudhishtira goes as a courtier, Arjuna plans to teach dancing and singing, Bhima goes as a cook. Nakula intends to look after the king's horses and Sahadeva is to tend the cattle, while Draupadi acts as a serving maid to the queen.

So, the Pandavas began their last year of exile in the land of King Virata. Every day the king rolled dice with Yudhishtira and lost heavily. Yudhishtira divided the gambling gains amongst his brothers. Bhima served in the royal kitchen and distributed to all whatever food was left. Arjuna, living in the royal boudoir, gave away the clothes he received as gifts. Nakula groomed the royal horses and the king was pleased with him. Sahadeva, tending his flocks of sheep and cattle, churned the milk into butter and gave the excess away.

In this manner four months passed.

Then a great fair was held. People from far and near came to see it.

Wrestling bouts were held to celebrate the occasion. In the series of wrestling matches, Jimutha the grappler overcame all. He boasted he could vanquish anyone rash enough to challenge him. Everybody took his boasting seriously.

The king thought of his chef, Bhima. He sent for him and said, "You once told me that you can wrestle. Go, and try your strength against Jimutha."

Bhima bowed to the king and went to meet the grappler. A large crowd



had gathered to watch the wrestling bout. Within a few seconds, he lifted Jimutha high his head and hurled him across the arena. Jimutha lay where he fell, still as death. The crowd roared its thrill and applauded the new champion. The happy king lavished many a gift on Bhima.

Now the king took pleasure in watching Bhima perform in the arena, fighting men and ferocious beasts with equal ease.

Arjuna, in his female garb, taught the royal ladies to sing and dance. They performed well in front of the king. Nakula and Sahadeva went about their duties efficiently.

Time sped. Then, one day, the king's brother-in-law, Kichaka, saw the beautiful Draupadi who served as the handmaid of the queen. He at once fell in love with her. He went to

Sudeshna, his sister and queen of the land. Eagerly, he enquired about the handmaid. The queen said, "Never mind who she is. She is not for you."

Kichaka was not disheartened by this rebuke. He waylaid Draupadi and declared his love for her. She replied, "Sir, I'm already married. Five demi-gods protect me from a distance. If you cause unhappiness to me, they'll kill you, like that," and she snapped her fingers.

Kichaka returned to his sister and again pestered her. He said, "I must marry this girl. She does not listen to me. She even threatens me."

Sudeshna replied, "True, she has also told me about her divine protectors. Forget her, else you may come to some great harm."

Kichaka boasted, "I've the power to crush even a thousand demons, and



demi-gods. I'm the Commander-in-Chief of all the royal forces. Besides, am I not handsome? Am I not wealthy? If *you* press my suit with her, she'll agree."

Then Sudeshna resignedly said, "I've said all I can. I can't support your wickedness. However, this afternoon I shall send her to you on some pretext. Try to convince her."

Sudeshna called Draupadi and gave her a golden chalice. "My brother keeps a stock of good wine. He promised to give me some. Go and bring it."

But Draupadi refused. She said, "Oh, Queen, I don't wish to go there. Your brother's behaviour is not correct. If I go there, he may harm me."

The queen poohpoohed her and said impatiently, "How silly can you be? My brother is a good man. If he

tries to harm you, I'll put a stop to it. Don't be afraid. Go, do my bidding."

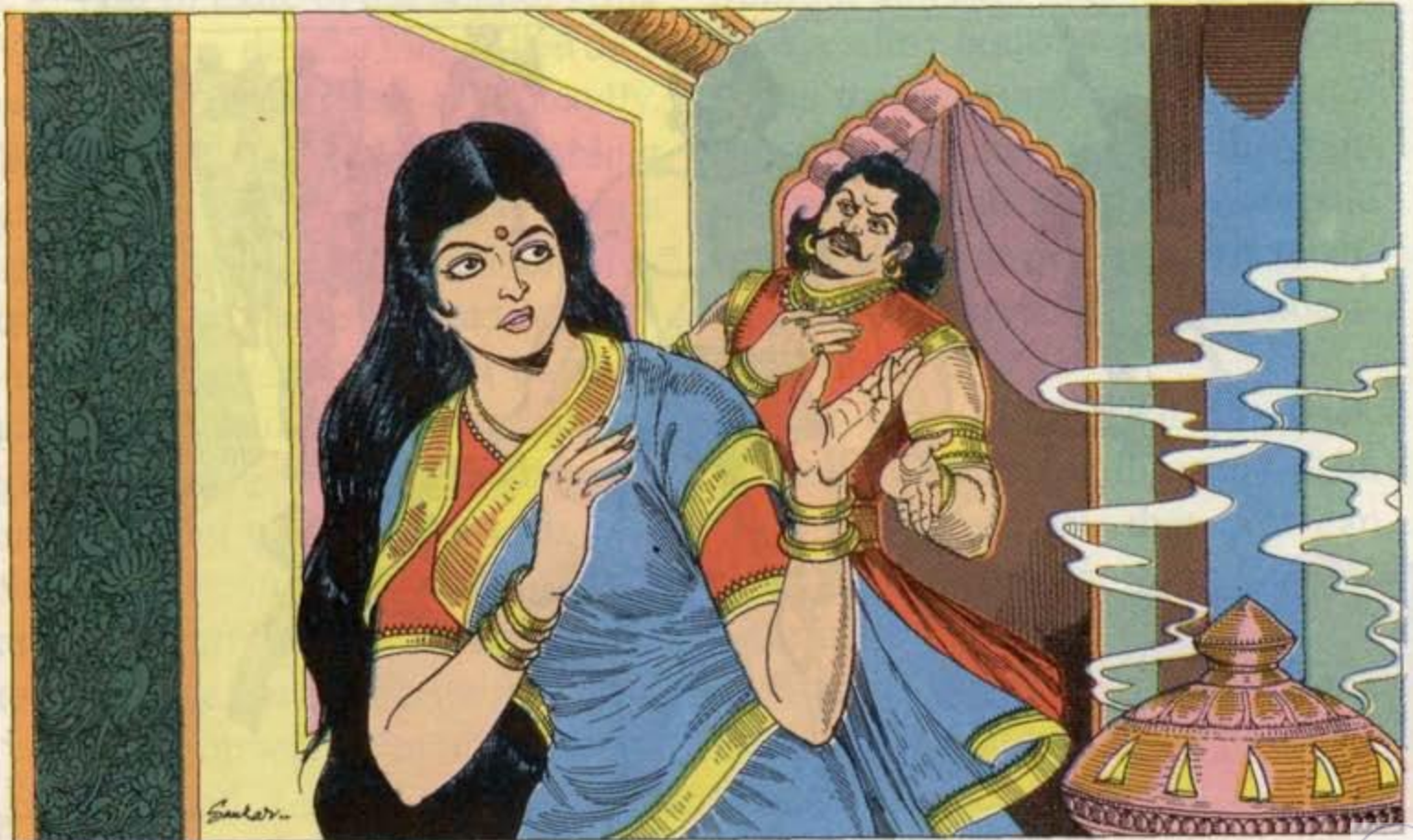
Draupadi reluctantly walked towards Kichaka's palace. When he saw her coming towards him, he was overjoyed. As she came inside the palace, he pompously said, "Look here, woman, marry me, and I'll give you all the jewels and all the ornaments in the kingdom."

Draupadi retorted. "Sir, I came here to do the queen's bidding. You promised to give her some choice wine. Pour it into this chalice."

Kichaka snorted. "What's the hurry, woman? Come to me," and, suiting words to action, he seized her hand.

Draupadi pushed him away and ran to the royal court. Kichaka chased her there and in the middle of the hall again seized her by the hair.

Yudhishtira and Bhima boiled



with rage at this sight. Bhima looked around for a handy weapon and his eyes fell on a large tree. Yudhishtira understood what he intended doing and hinted loudly, "Oh! Chef, are you looking around for good firewood? That tree won't suit you. Look elsewhere."

Bhima sat down in obedience to that unspoken command.

Draupadi realised that the Pandavas were not in a position to help her. So, she turned to the king and said, "Oh King! See how this wicked man insults me. Yet you keep quiet. Even, my divine protectors, for some reason best known to them, are unwilling to come to my rescue!"

The king answered. "Woman, you ask me to intervene in your personal affairs. How can I judge your complaint without knowing what has hap-

pened?"

Then Yudhishtira, now known as Gangapattar, said, "Woman, go to your apartment. You say, you've divine protectors. Then, leave this matter to them. There must be a reason why they haven't come to your aid now. Don't be afraid. Those who try to harm you will be punished."

Draupadi took the hint and went to the queen. Sudeshna noticed her tears and asked, "What's this? Why are you unhappy? Has someone caused you harm?"

Then Draupadi related all that had happened. She said, "Oh Queen, now Kichaka's end is near. My protectors won't spare him."

Sudeshna became alarmed at these words. She realised that Kichaka had brought some terrible danger upon himself. But what could she do?



Draupadi swore vengeance on Kichaka, and at the dead of night, she went to Bhima. Bhima lay restlessly in his bed smarting under the insult of the morning. When he saw Draupadi, he said, "Thank God, you've come. This morning I wanted to dash Kichaka's brains on the palace floor. But brother warned me against it. But I won't rest until I've killed Kichaka and wiped out the insult to you."

Draupadi said, "True. We shouldn't be rash and disclose our identities so soon. That's what your brother meant. I shall make that wicked Kichaka come to this place by a ruse."

Bhima nodded. "Right," he said. "I wanted to toss everyone at the dice hall over my head, even Duryodhana and Duhsasana. But I was helpless. Now I'm strong again. Get Kichaka to

come to the dance theatre tomorrow night. I shall take care of him."

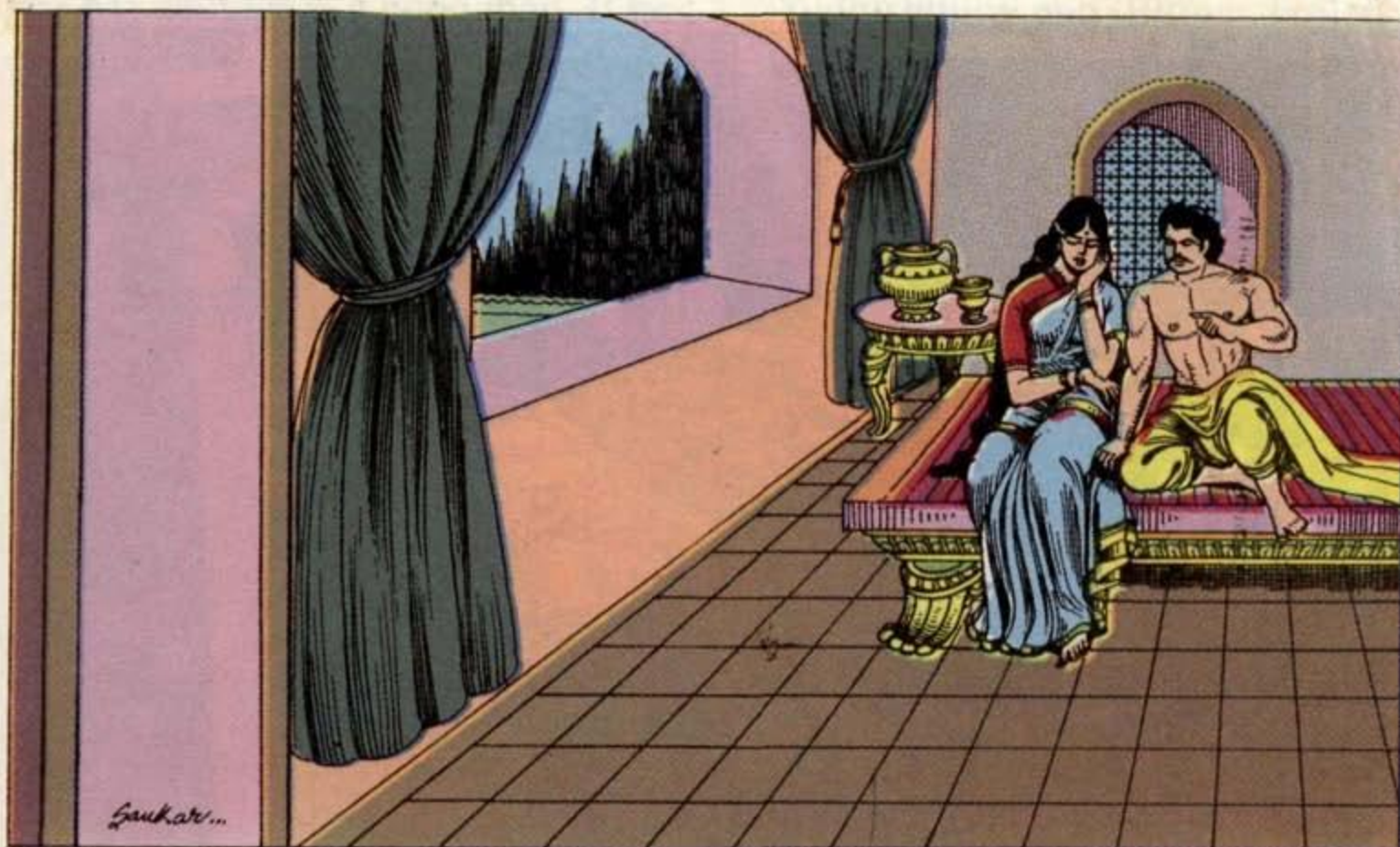
Draupadi said, "Yes. The dance hall is the right place. At night it is deserted. I'll tell Kichaka to meet me there secretly. He'll be only too glad to come."

Bhima replied, "Just let me get my hands on him. He shall be reduced to pulp. I'll first tear him limb by limb."

Draupadi agreed but said, "Everything must be done on the sly. When they find Kichaka's body in the morning, they will think that my divine protectors have taken a terrible vengeance. After all, everyone in the palace knows that I've divine protectors."

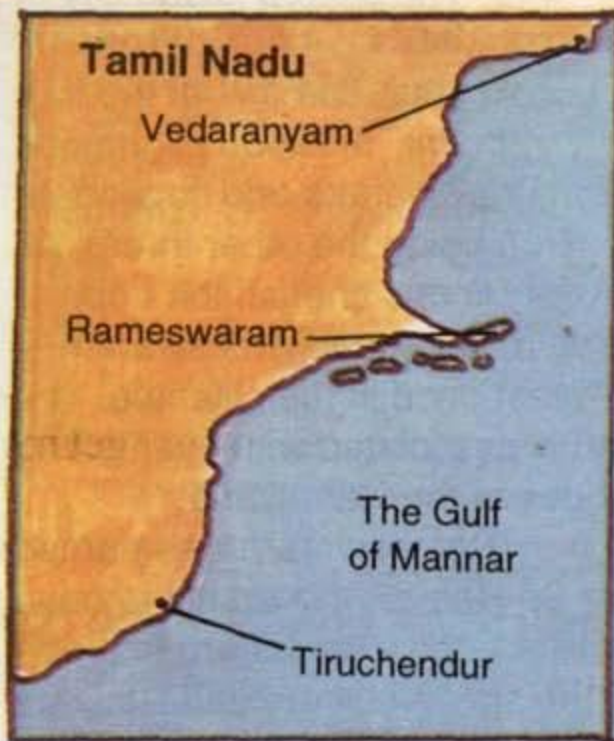
Then Draupadi left Bhima and went to her apartment.

(To continue)



The Gulf of Mannar and Beyond

Text : Meera Nair ♦ Artworks : Gopkumar



Sailing up the coast from Kanya Kumari, we enter the **Gulf of Mannar**.

At the entrance to the Gulf of Mannar, on the mainland, is the seaside town of **Tiruchendur**. A huge temple of Lord Subrahmanya, or Muruga, stands facing the shore. It is one of the six abodes of Subrahmanya and the only one

built on unelevated land. The original temple, constructed over a thousand years ago, was replaced three centuries back by a massive nine-storeyed structure. Pilgrims come to the temple with 'kavadis' containing offerings for the lord.

Some kilometres to the north of Tiruchendur is **Tutukudi** or **Tuticorin**. It was declared India's 10th major port on July 11, 1974. Thus Tamil Nadu became the only state in the country with two major ports. The harbour here is man-made and can function in all weather. To its north and south are two breakwaters — walls built out into the sea to protect the harbour from the force of the waves. The breakwater in the north (4096 m) is the second-longest in the world.

Pearls from India were valued from ancient times. Most of the pearls that were sent out to Rome and other distant countries in the 2nd century were obtained from the Gulf of Mannar. Tuticorin is still a pearl trading centre. It is better known, though, for its salt factories, fertilizer, heavy water and thermal plants.



The temple of Lord Subrahmanya



The sacred island city of **Rameswaram** lies north of the Gulf of Mannar. It is one of the four 'dhams' of Hindu pilgrimage (Badrinath, Dwaraka and Jagannath Puri being the other three). All devout Hindus cherish the hope of being able to see Rameswaram at least once in their lifetime. The island is associated with events and episodes of the Ramayana.

Rameswaram was named after Sri Rama, who is said to have consecrated a *linga* here to atone for the sin of having killed Ravana, who was of Brahmin descent. To worship Siva, Rama asked Hanuman to fetch a *linga* from Kailas. Hanuman sped away and was gone for a long time. The auspicious hour for performing the rites drew near and there was no sign of Hanuman. Finally Sita

decided they could wait no longer and made a *linga* out of sand.

Hanuman was terribly upset to find this when he returned. Rama told him to remove the consecrated *linga* and replace it with the one he had brought. But however hard he tried to pull it out, the *linga* just wouldn't budge. Rama then suggested to Hanuman that he place the *linga* that he had brought by the side of the consecrated one, promising him that all *pujas* would be offered to it first. Even today pilgrims worship the 'Kasi Viswanatha Ramanathaswamy *linga*', the one installed by Hanuman, before the 'Rama *linga*'.

In the 15th century, King Udayana, belonging to the Sethupati royal family, built the **Ramanathaswamy temple** at the place where Rama is



Hanuman trying hard to pull out the *linga*.



The Rameswaram Temple

fascinating creatures living in the coral reefs that surround the island.

At the southeast tip of Rameswaram, lies **Dhanushkodi**. It is hardly a stone's throw from **Sri Lanka**.

Dhanushkodi means 'Rama's bow'. The gently curving shape of the shoreline here does indeed suggest a bow. The

Kodhandaramasvami temple, dedicated to Rama, has idols of Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Hanuman and Ravana's brother Vibhishana. It stands at the place where Vibhishana is said to have surrendered to Rama.

Close to the island of Rameswaram is a chain of sandbanks known as **Adam's Bridge**. It is believed to be the bridge that Rama built to cross over to Lanka. Geological evidence suggests that this is all that remains of a former land connection between India and Sri Lanka. This causeway, more than 30 m long, is a serious hindrance to navigation.

believed to have worshipped Siva. The temple has a 1,200 m long corridor with a thousand elaborately carved pillars. It is the longest single corridor in India.

Besides Hindus, Sikhs also regard Rameswaram as a holy place as it was visited by their 10th guru, Guru Gobind Singh. Besides being a place of pilgrimage, Rameswaram is of great interest to marine biologists, who come here to study the



The mighty corridor



Sand dunes at Dhanushkodi. Spinifex grass known as "Ravana's whiskers" in Tamil, holds the sand in place.





**Sage Agastya receiving blessings
from Siva and Parvati**

Kailas. Hence Vedaranyam is also called 'Dakshina Kailasam'.

From Rameswaram, we sail across **Palk Bay** and finally cross the **Palk Strait** to emerge into the Bay of Bengal. Flamingos flap across the sky as one approaches **Kodikkarai** or **Point Calimere**. A variety of birds can be seen at the bird sanctuary here.

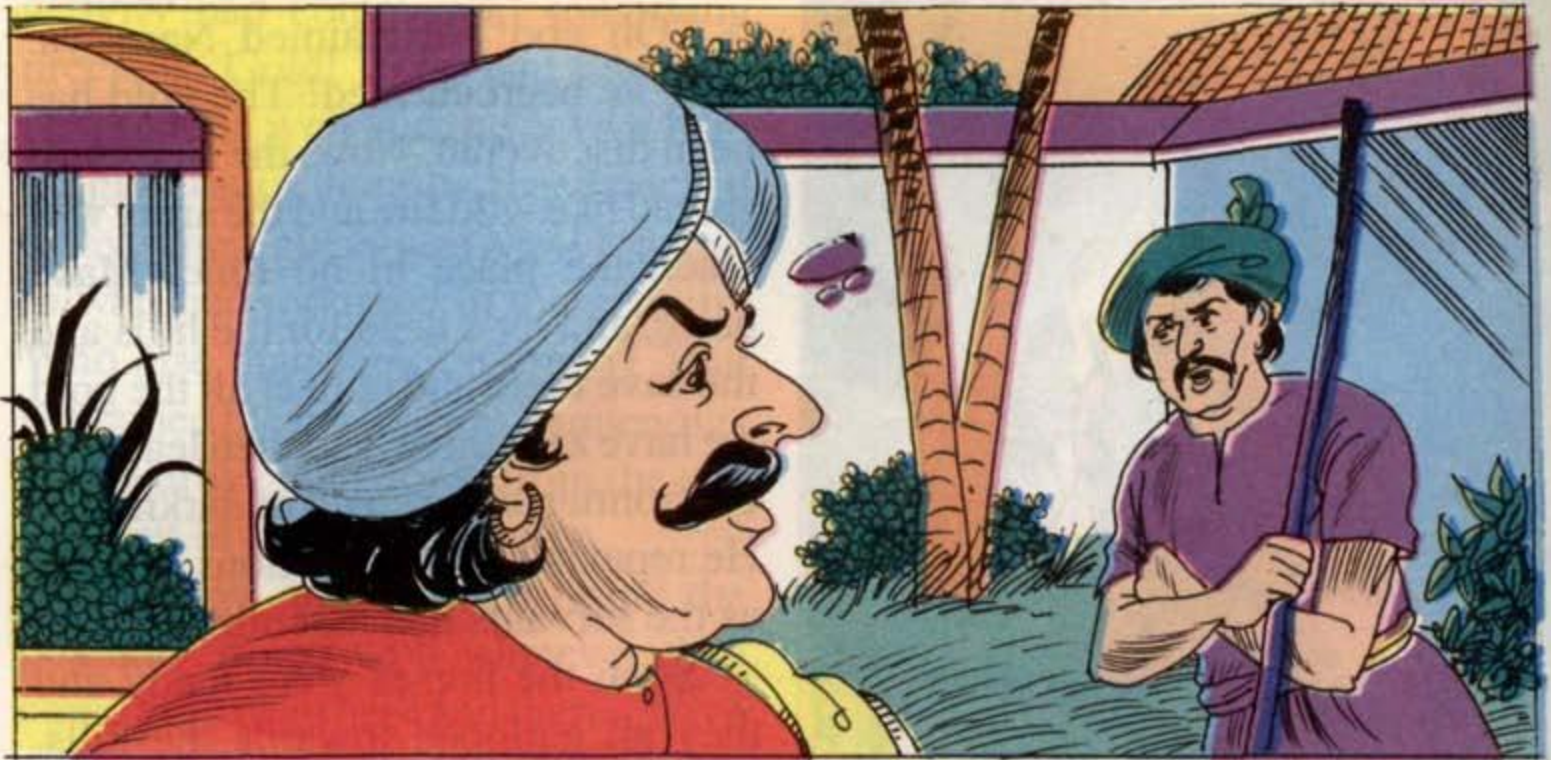
Vedaranyam, a coastal town close to Kodikkarai, gained historical importance after C. Rajagopalachari, who later became the Governor-General of independent India, led the salt satyagraha here during the country's struggle for freedom.

Vedaranyam is also known for its Siva temple, where the idols of Siva and Parvati are clad in their wedding attire. It was here that Siva is said to have appeared to the sage, Agastya in the form in which he married Parvati at

Kodikkarai



The woes of a village



The story so far: The villagers of Ganganagar send their elders to the Chalukya emperor Pulakesan. They have a grievance. Strange happenings have put the villagers in a fix. Their children disappear, mysterious fires break out at dead of night; cattle perish for no apparent reason. So much so, they are all trying to desert the village. The emperor sends them back with the assurance that he would send guards to protect the village. When the guards also get killed, the army commander alerts the emperor. A few days later, a horse rider reaches the village chieftain's doorstep, all weary, for shelter for the night, which is reluctantly provided. He escapes an attempt at poisoning. The next morning, the rider is missing, along with his horse. Chieftain Nagayya is aghast. Who was the stranger? Where did he disappear? Now read on...

A little later, the servant had more disturbing news for his master. "Master, the men you had sent to set fire to the huts in the eastern part of the village have all been slain!"

"What!" Nagayya could not believe his ears. "Killed? How?"

"We don't know, Master," the servant pleaded ignorance.

"We only know that they had been killed with a broad sword."

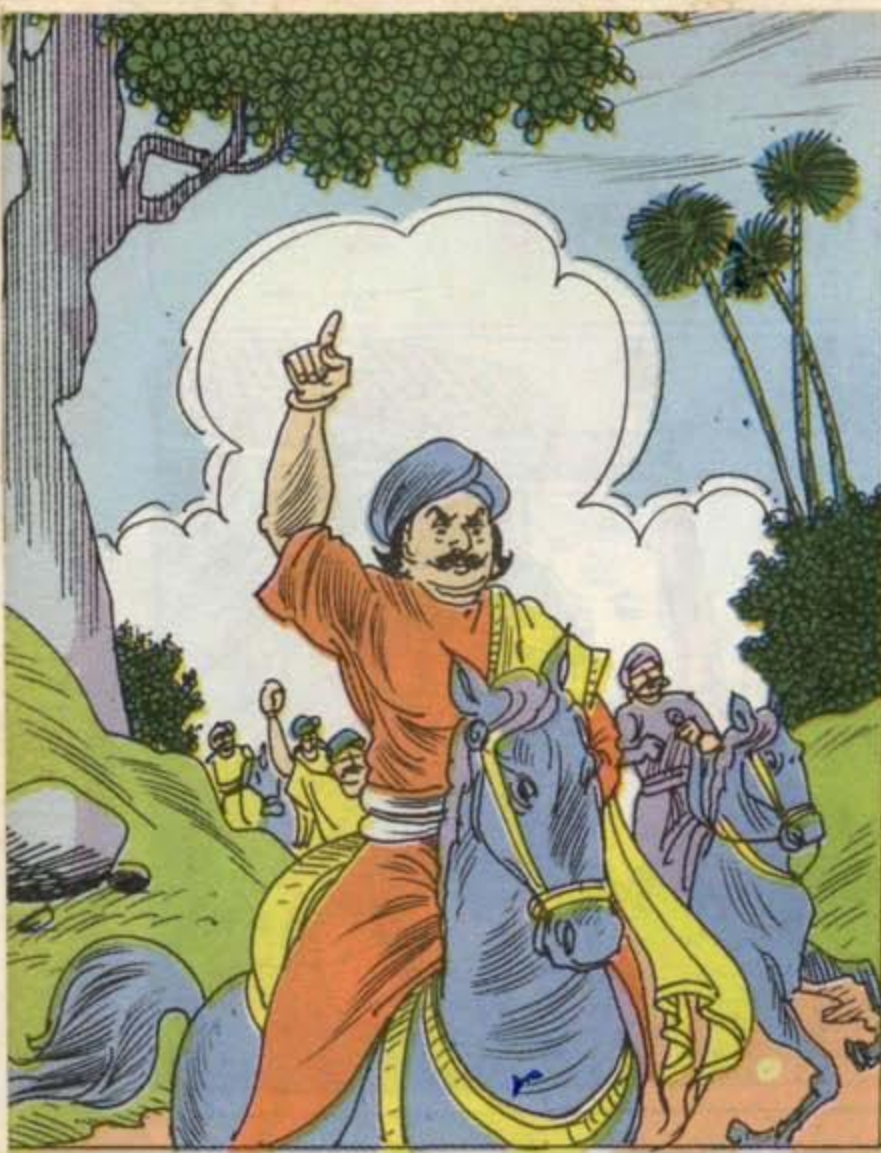
"A broad sword?" Nagayya fell

into silence immediately, as if he was trying to recollect something. "Then it must be that strange horse-rider who came here last night. Remember, he was carrying a sword?"

"Yes, Master," said the servant, "I saw him unbuckling it when I took his food into the stable."

"Send search parties immediately!" ordered the chieftain. "He had the audacity to tell me that he would roam the village as long as he liked!

2. CHIEFTAIN'S GREED FOR GOLD



You must get him and bring him to me before the sun sets today!" he thundered.

The mercenaries in the pay of the chueftain branched out to comb the village for the stranger. There was no trace of him. As dusk fell, one of them came running. He was bleeding from head to foot and was panting. "Master! The well has been discovered!" he blurted out. "Two of us happened to pass that way and we found two bodies near the well. They must be the guards you had asked to take care of the place. And when we went near the well, we found someone who has not been seen here before climbing out of the well. We went to capture him, but he managed to strike down

my companion. He then turned on me. Though I fought with him, I was injured all over. I ran to inform you of the happenings."

"Oh god!" exclaimed Nagayya. "We've been cheated! The gold has been discovered. Now, the news will spread like wild fire and the army will reach the place in no time. Make haste, and let's head for the hills and the cave there and collect all the gold we have kept there, and then leave for the frontier under cover of darkness!" He repeated the instructions as soon as the servants had assembled.

Soon the horses were ready and they all galloped towards the hills. Nagayya went very fast, and his men sometimes found it difficult to keep pace with him till they came to a narrow path where naturally their master had to slow down. "Yonder there, Master, is the cave which has the cache of gold!"

Nagayya shaded his eyes with his palm and his face lit with a smile. "Come on! Let's not waste any time!" He signalled with his hand for his men to advance. From then on, he fell behind them, allowing them to go forward. Did he have any premonition?

For, people were already at the mouth of the cave to greet them. They were some of the peasants of the village who had been driven out of their farmlands by the headman. And leading them was the strange visitor



of the confrontation many of the mercenaries got killed. All others meekly surrendered.

The emperor's soldiers suddenly realised that the chieftain was missing. They had seen him on his horseback as they approached the cave, but during their encounter with his mercenaries, they had lost sight of him.

Pulakesan ordered a thorough search among the dead. Nagayya was not one of those slain by his soldiers, because the chieftain was hefty person who could be easily identified. It was evident that he had managed to escape, without attracting the attention of anyone.

The emperor, along with his army and the men whom they had captured,

then returned to the capital. He, however, reinforced the strength of the guards who were sent to village Ganganagar. With the help of the chieftain's mercenaries they pieced together the mystery of the village. It so happened that Nagayya was once digging a well, when he came upon a gold mine. Presumably the cache had been left by some ancient ruler who might have left it at a place he thought was the safest, while escaping from an enemy. He then started digging at all sorts of places in the hope of making bigger hauls. That was how he started searing away the villagers, so that not only would he get free access to their lands but there would not be anyone to notice his nefarious activities.

"So, it was gold that was behind all this evil, Dayanand," remarked Emperor Pulakesan, while talking to his commander. "Nagayya was very clever that way, and I'm sure he won't remain idle if he is alive and has gone into hiding. He'll surface soon, probably with cleverer designs to amass wealth. You must alert everybody in the administration to keep a careful watch for the man. I've a feeling that we won't have to wait for long!"

"As you wish, your majesty," said commander Dayanand. "I shall have his description widely known. We must catch him unawares." He then took leave of the emperor.

—To continue

WHERE TO HIT THE DOG

Long ago there lived a famous wit called Mullah Do Piyaza. His quarrelsome neighbour had a noisy little dog who loved to bark and howl without any reason. In the middle of the night, he would begin his nocturnal serenade to the annoyance of all who rested in the vicinity. The Mullah hated the animal as it always disturbed his sleep.

After a long day's hard labour, the wit was once blissfully sleeping in his house. The clock struck twelve and as usual began the loud barking and howling of the neighbour's pet. He was startled up from his sound slumber.

'It's going too far now; that adamant dog must be taught a good lesson,' he muttered angrily and, picking up his stick, marched off to the adjacent garden.

He pulled the animal out of his kennel and started beating him with his crooked stump. The poor dog jumped up and down, howling and barking at the top of his voice. The great hullabaloo brought his master out and he at once took his neighbour to task.

"You, rowdy Mullah! Stop bullying my darling pet," he shouted angrily, shaking his fists.

"What would you do if I don't? You know, all these days he has been disturbing my heavenly sleep!" retorted the Mullah emphatically.

"If you dare hit his back again, then I'll break your back right away!" warned the neighbour, gnashing his teeth.

"Then allow me to hit his head, at least," replied the wit swinging his baton.

"In that case, my fists will crack your empty head! Beware! If your stick even

touches my dog's legs, I'll forthwith make you lame! Tit for tat! Is that clear, Mister?" cautioned the angry man, glaring.

The Mullah pondered awhile and then said with an innocent smile, "You're indeed very clear, my dear friend, I've understood all your fair warnings to the letter. In that case, if ever your darling little pet disturbs me again, I'll only hit his lovely tail!"

The furious neighbour was dumbfounded and was in a dilemma. For now when the Mullah hit at his dog's tail, where could he give him a fitting reply? He thought it wiser to control his naughty little pet.



Of Indian Origin

Several of the trees which have already appeared in this series, though common in our country, have originated in other countries and in course of time found their way to the Indian sub-continent. But *Dillenia* is of Indian origin, as its botanical name will suggest. *Dillenia indica* is named after the well-known botanist, J.J. Dillenius, while *indica* refers to its Indian origin. The names in Indian languages are *Chalta* in Hindi, *Chalita* in Bengali and Malayalam, *Chalota* in Oriya, *Karambal* in Gujarati, *Karmal* in Marathi, *Peddakalinga* and *Uva* in Telugu and *Bettada kanagal* in Kannada.

The tree is very common in W.Bengal, Bihar, and Assam, but can be seen in other areas also. It is an erect tree with a rounded crown. It grows to a height of 10 to 20 metres. Its branches spread all around, and the bright green leaves make it ever-green. The bark is rather smooth and peels off in scales. It is brownish red in colour. The leaves are broad and pointed, with toothed margins. They grow at the end of the branches. The leaves have veins running parallel to the toothed margins.

The large sized flowers ("as big as

two fists") are white. They are borne singly at the ends of branches. The fragrant flowers appear in June/July. The fruit, as large as 8 to 12 cm in diameter, is hard on the surface. It has small kidney-shaped seeds covered by a sticky pulp. One variety of *Dillenia*, seen in the western region, has leaves as big as banana leaves.



BALAKI

One remarkable thing with the sages was, they never thought they had known whatever was to be known. Most of them were humble, always receptive to new knowledge, eager to learn more and more.

Balaki was a young sage who believed that he knew enough to teach anybody, even the scholarly sages. He was called Driptabalaki, meaning Balaki the proud.

One day, he heard that the King of Kashi was a great lover of knowledge. Balaki proceeded to Kashi and met the king and offered to give him the knowledge of Brahma. But as soon as he started speaking, the king completed the sentences, because he was already a master of that knowledge. Soon Balaki realised that there was no subject on which he knew more than the king.

But, instead of feeling humiliated, Sage Balaki at once became a disciple of the king.

The king, one day, showed Balaki a sleeping man and asked him where the man's consciousness was while he was asleep. The king then explained that, unknown to the man who sleeps, his inner consciousness is often in a state of bliss, because it travels closer to God. If a man can retain that bliss even while he is awake, then he has become a true master of his own self.



DO YOU KNOW?

1. Who is the author of *Kathasaritsagar*?
2. What is the major ingredient in dynamite?
3. What is common between Homer, Milton, Helen Keller, and Ved Mehta?
4. Which amendment to the Indian Constitution deleted the right to property from the Fundamental Rights?
5. Whose pen-name is 'Bharatidasar'?
6. Which Indian was the first recipient of the Magsaysay Award?
7. Which organisation was the first one to receive the Nobel Peace Prize?
8. The Nobel Awards are distributed on December 10 every year. What is the significance of the day?
9. Who designed the Statue of Liberty?
10. What are the official languages of the United Nations?
11. When did the U.N. Charter come into being?
12. When did India first demand permanent membership of the U.N. Security Council?
13. Who is the author of the autobiography titled "*Revenue Stamp*"?
14. An Indian State has adopted English as its official language. Which State?
15. Which is National Highway (N.H.) number 1?
16. Which country will host the next World Cup Cricket?

ANSWERS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Somadeva. | 9. Frederic Auguste Bartholdi |
| 2. Nitroglycerine. | 10. Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. |
| 3. Despite they being blind, they wrote great literary works. | 11. October 24, 1945. |
| 4. The 44th Amendment, in the year 1978. | 12. October 3, 1994. |
| 5. Atal Behari Vajpayee. | 13. Amrita Pritam. |
| 6. Acharya Vinoba Bhave. | 14. Nagaland. |
| 7. Institute of International Law, in Belgium. | 15. Between Delhi and Chandigarh. |
| 8. It is the World Human Rights Day. | 16. England. |



How the Man and the Genie Grew Wiser



Long, long ago there lived a poor man. He had a dream of becoming very wealthy one day and live like a king. But he was a lazy fellow and wanted to fulfil his ambition without much effort and exertion.

So he went to a sage and prayed, "O Wise One, give me a magical charm with which I could invoke a genie who would do all my biddings continuously."

"Continuously? Can you order it about continuously?" asked the sage.

"Of course, I can!" the man assured, greatly enthused.

"I know a certain genie who wants

non-stop work. But, my boy, the charm you ask for might be risky for you. Therefore, I advise you to remain happy with what you have and lead a simple life," replied the hermit, dissuading him.

But the greedy man would not listen nor budge from the place and went on pleading all day long. Finally the sage, tired of him, gave him the charm he desired.

"I warn you once again," he said as the happy man thanked him and took his leave, "that you're being unwise."

The poor man strode back home in high spirits with a song on his lips. On reaching, he could no longer wait



to put the charm to action. At once there appeared before him a colossal giant.

"Your command please, Master! Do not tarry or I'll kill you," thundered the genie.

"An emperor's palace with every object of comfort!" exclaimed the man in glee.

No sooner said than done. There suddenly emerged out of nothing a magnificent palace in the place of his tumble-down hut.

"Master, your next order please! Or else I will have to take your life!" roared the genie.

"Let my castle be surrounded with pretty gardens, fountains, orchards, flora and fauna..." he said all that he could squeeze into one gasp of his breath.

In a twinkling of an eye the order

was carried out to the letter.

"Now give me your next command or say your last prayers," threatened the giant, his voice like a crack of thunder.

"Bring me the fairest damsel to be my wife and queen," ordered the man in a kingly tone.

In a trice there stood beside him the most beautiful maiden that he could ever dream of in his life. The genie called for more orders with his usual threat.

The poor man was at his wit's end and nervously muttered, "Gentle Giant, you must be tired, rest awhile now. For the present I've no more orders for you. I'll think of some tomorrow."

"Then take your life I must," announced the genie in a terrible voice.

The frightened man began to run.



He ran and ran till he came to the dwelling of the hermit.

"What's the matter with you?" asked the sage with a faint smile on his lips.

"O Great One, save me, save me from the giant who pursues me to take my life!" he blurted with tearful eyes and fell at his feet.

The genie who had reached by then was about to grab the poor man but stopped short at the command of the hermit.

"Halt! Why are you after this man?" he asked.

"You know my rule, don't you? I'll work for one so long as he continues to issue fresh orders. But the moment he fails to do so, I must kill him," reminded the giant almost falling upon the poor man once again.

"Hold on!" said the sage. "You

want work, I'll assign you one. Look, there lies a dog slumbering in the shade. Straighten its crooked tail."

The giant at once sat down to work. He straightened the dog's tail. No sooner had he done that than it became twisted again. He continued with the process. The dog occasionally growled, but did not mind it. Soon the giant looked pale.

"No, you must go on trying till the tail is quite straight," reminded the hermit.

Again and again the giant did manage to stretch the tail quite straight. But alas, the moment he let it go, it sprang back to its original position. Thus he was endlessly occupied in this unusual task.

An hour went by. The giant wiped his sweat and looking pitifully at the sage, said, "How long do I have to go





on? This tail is almost like human nature—never to be straightened, sir!"

"Tired, eh? Then vanish!"

The giant was seen no more.

The poor man who was looking in awe at the proceedings before him, bowed to the sage and thanked him profusely for saving his life.

"Dear son, didn't I warn you before? Now go and live in peace and happiness in your humble dwelling and lead a simple life. For the palace, gardens and the fairest maiden have all vanished into thin air along with

their maker, the giant," said the hermit.

"You have indeed opened my eyes! I've learnt a great lesson! All these days, I was so greedy, blinded by my craving for wealth and power!" said the poor man with deep gratitude in his heart.

"Yes, never again seek the wealth that you do not deserve and have not earned out of your own efforts and perseverance. For such wealth, remember, is not free from the fear of a giant threatening to kill you," gently warned the sage.

—A.K.D.

- THE SOUL IS NOT WHERE IT LIVES, BUT WHERE IT LOVES
- A BURNT CHILD DREADS THE FIRE
- EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER



Golden Hour 9

**Where in the World
Would you Find.....**



**...Madame Tussaud's Wax
Museum?**

The museum was established by a French-
woman named Marie Tussaud in 1834
and is today famous for its collection of wax
portraits of the famous and the infamous.
Where is the museum?

...KOALA BEARS?

The baby koala bear spends the
first six months of its life in its
mother's stomach pouch, very
much like a baby kangaroo.

Koala bears are
fussy eaters
whose main
food is
eucalyptus
leaves.
Where are
these
animals
found ?



...The Little Mermaid?

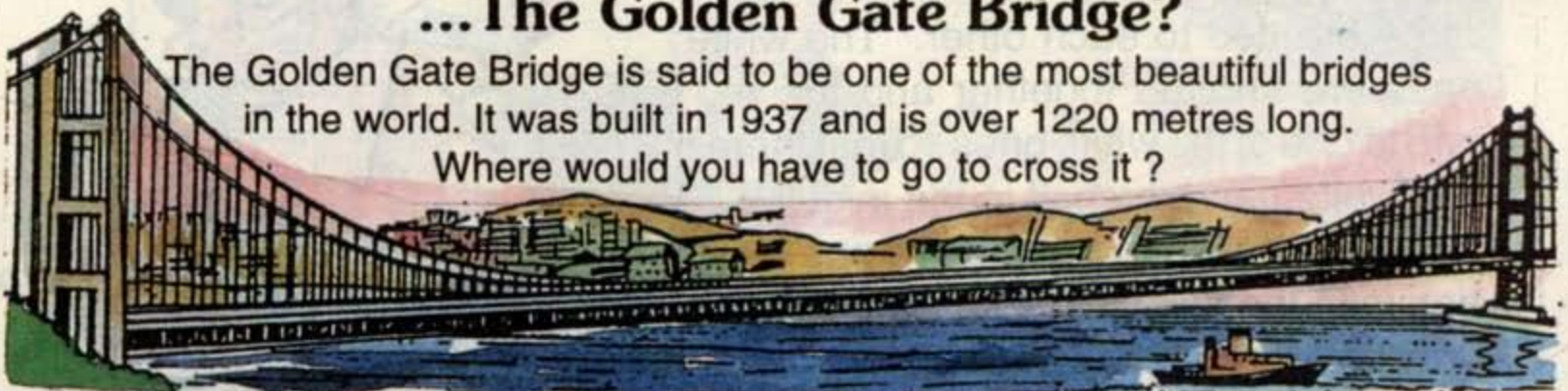
THE LITTLE MERMAID is a memorial to one of
the greatest story-tellers of all time,
Hans Christian Andersen. The bronze statue
stands at the entrance to a harbour. Which one ?



...The Golden Gate Bridge?

The Golden Gate Bridge is said to be one of the most beautiful bridges
in the world. It was built in 1937 and is over 1220 metres long.

Where would you have to go to cross it ?





BRAINTEASERS

1. Two Arabs, one carrying 3 loaves and the other, 5 met a traveller who had no bread but was very hungry. The Arabs invited him to eat with them and the three men shared the 8 loaves equally. Afterwards, the traveller put down 8 pieces of silver as payment for his share and went away. How should the money be divided fairly between the two Arabs?



2. Three fat men were huddled under a small umbrella yet none of them got wet. Why?
3. What do Germans do with banana peels?

4. A bus started out empty. At the first stop it picked up 16 passengers. Stopping again, it let out 7 passengers and picked up 3. At the next stop, 9 passengers got in and 5 got off. When the bus stopped again, 5 passengers got on and 3 got off. At the last stop 2 got out. How many stops did the bus make?
5. Three handkerchiefs – two white and one red – are tied to each other. The white ones are knotted together and the red one to one of the white ones so that there is a white handkerchief in the middle. If you are asked to put the red one between the two white ones without untying any knot, how would you do it?

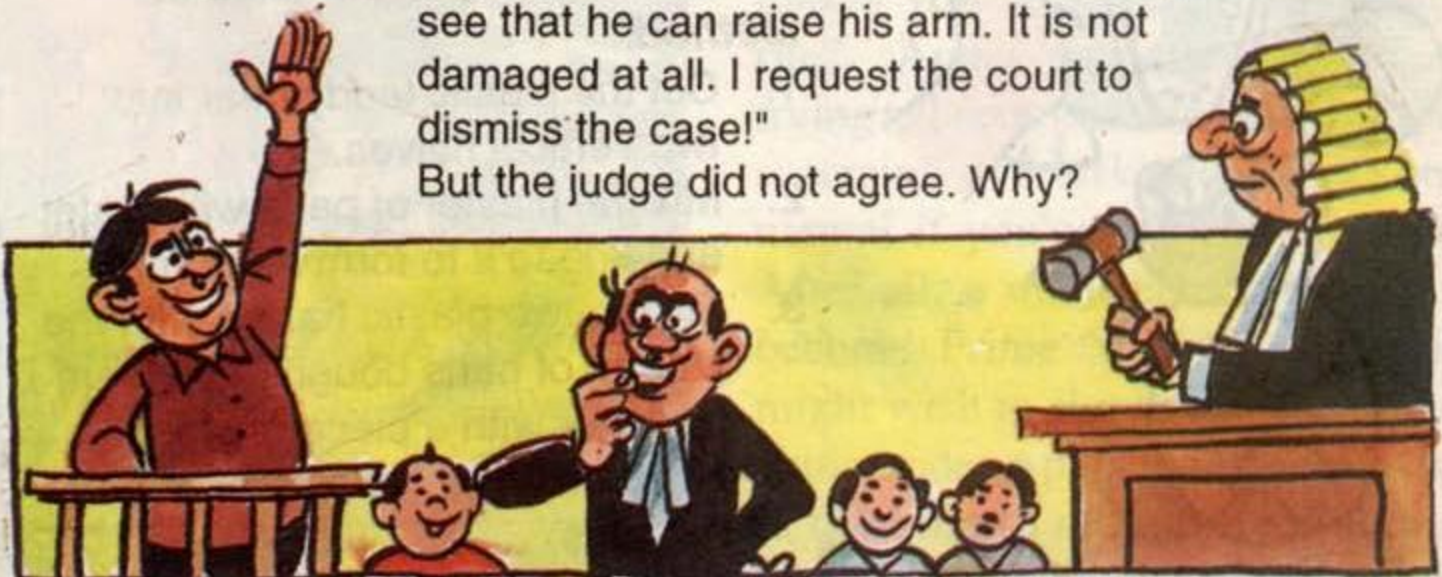


6. Which was the first man-made object to break the sound-barrier?
7. I knocked over a glass that had been filled just a moment earlier. And though not a drop of water came out of the glass the table cloth got soaked. How ?
8. In a village devastated by war a handful of men found that they had just enough water to last 13 days if each man was allowed a litre a day. On the 5th day some water was accidentally spilled and on the same day, one of the men died of his wounds after consuming his quota of water. The water ration was not reduced and it lasted the remaining men exactly 13 days as they had expected. How much water was spilt?



9. The Courtroom Drama:
Balwant Sharma was thrown off his seat when the bus he was travelling in came to a sudden stop. He injured his right arm and claiming that he could no longer use it, sued the transport company for Rs.10 lakh. In the court, the lawyer who was representing the transport company asked Sharma to show the court how high he could raise his arm. Sharma raised his arm to shoulder level. "Now," said the lawyer, "show the court how high you could raise it before the accident."
Sharma raised his arm above his head.
"This only shows he's lying your Honour!" thundered the lawyer. "We can all

see that he can raise his arm. It is not damaged at all. I request the court to dismiss the case!"
But the judge did not agree. Why?



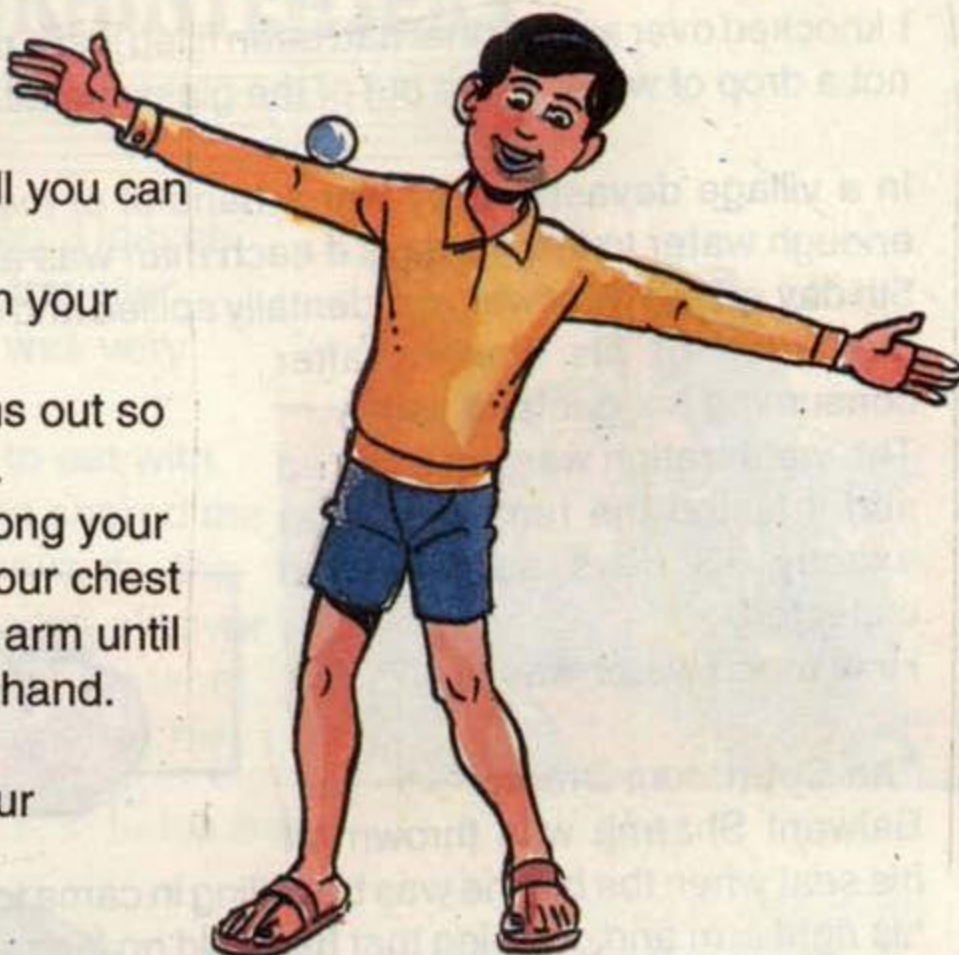
Answers to Golden Hour No.8 :

1. The Temple of Adinath at Ranakpur in Rajasthan.
2. Amarnath in Kashmir
3. The early inhabitants of Easter Island.

Body Roll

Here's a trick with a ball you can try out.

- Hold a tennis ball in your right hand.
- Hold both your arms out so that they form a 'T'.
- Now roll the ball along your right arm, across your chest and along your left arm until it reaches your left hand. If you succeed, try rolling it back to your right hand!



A Teddy Bear Statue

Things required :

An old plastic teddy bear, plaster of paris, a pair of scissors, a piece of string, and a few colours.

Method:

- Cut the plastic teddy bear into two vertical halves.
- Mix the plaster of paris with water and knead it to form a dough.
- Fill the two plastic halves with the plaster of paris dough. Join them together with a piece of string.
- Keep aside till the plaster of paris hardens.
- Peel away the plastic halves and you'll find that the plaster of paris has taken the shape of your teddy bear.
- Lastly, colour the eyes, nose and mouth of the teddy bear.

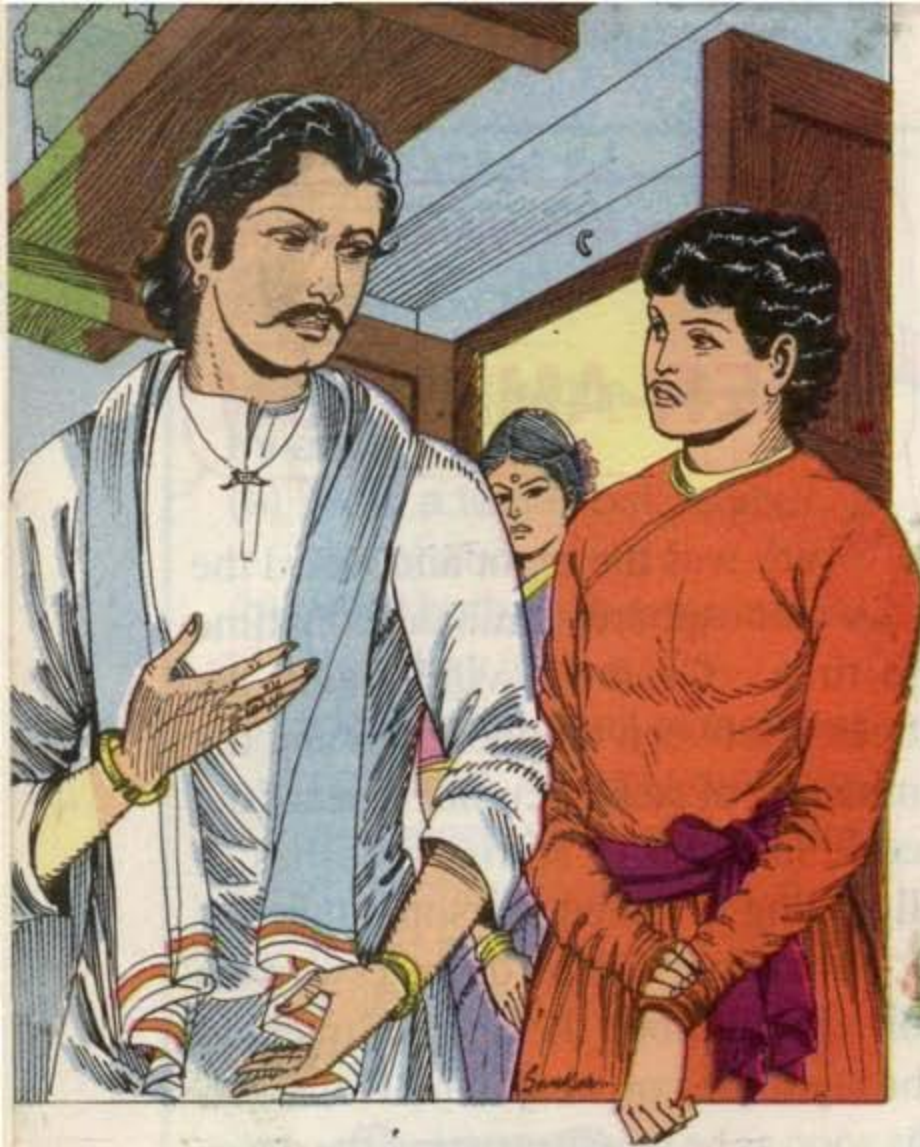


New Tales of King Vikram and the Vampire

OVER-AMBITION

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikram did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King, normally you should be enjoying a good sleep at this hour of the night. Instead of doing that, what makes you go through this strange rite? Aren't you afraid? Are you trying to become an emperor, holding suzerainty over all kingdoms? It's only natural if you've such an ambition. After all, a minister might want to become Prime Minister, a soldier might wish to rise to the position of commander, a poor man might dream of becoming a millionaire. But there are also persons who might decline such promotions or rise in position—like Saroop Singh. You must hear his story, O King. Listen to me." The



vampire then began his narration.

Saroop Singh was a young man of Shankarpuri. He had had his education in a *gurukul*. He was the only son of Hari Singh, who was not affluent but could manage a life of modest means. He was expecting his son to help him on the farm after his schooling. But that was not to be. He would spend most of the day beneath the banyan tree in front of their house, deep in thought. Had the education his son received at the *gurukul* gone into his head? thought father Hari Singh. For the first few days, he left Saroop to himself. Later, he decided to enquire. "Young man!" he rebuked his son. "Why are you wasting your time? At least you could help me on

the farm, couldn't you?" He then waited for an answer from his son.

"Nothing good will come out of any work on the farm," replied Saroop Singh coolly. "It's no use toiling hard on the farm. It won't bring in any benefit. I've been wondering, father, why I can't go and meet the yogi who has an *ashram* in the forest near the mountains. I've a hunch that afterwards, our house will have mountains of gold. Just wait and see!"

It was clear that Saroop did not want to obey his father or accept *his* advice. Hari Singh felt that it was a mistake to have sent the boy to a *gurukul*. There was no point in advising him any more, he decided. Let him go his way. When she heard of Hari Singh's decision, his wife really wondered how quick he changed his attitude towards his son. What a somersault!

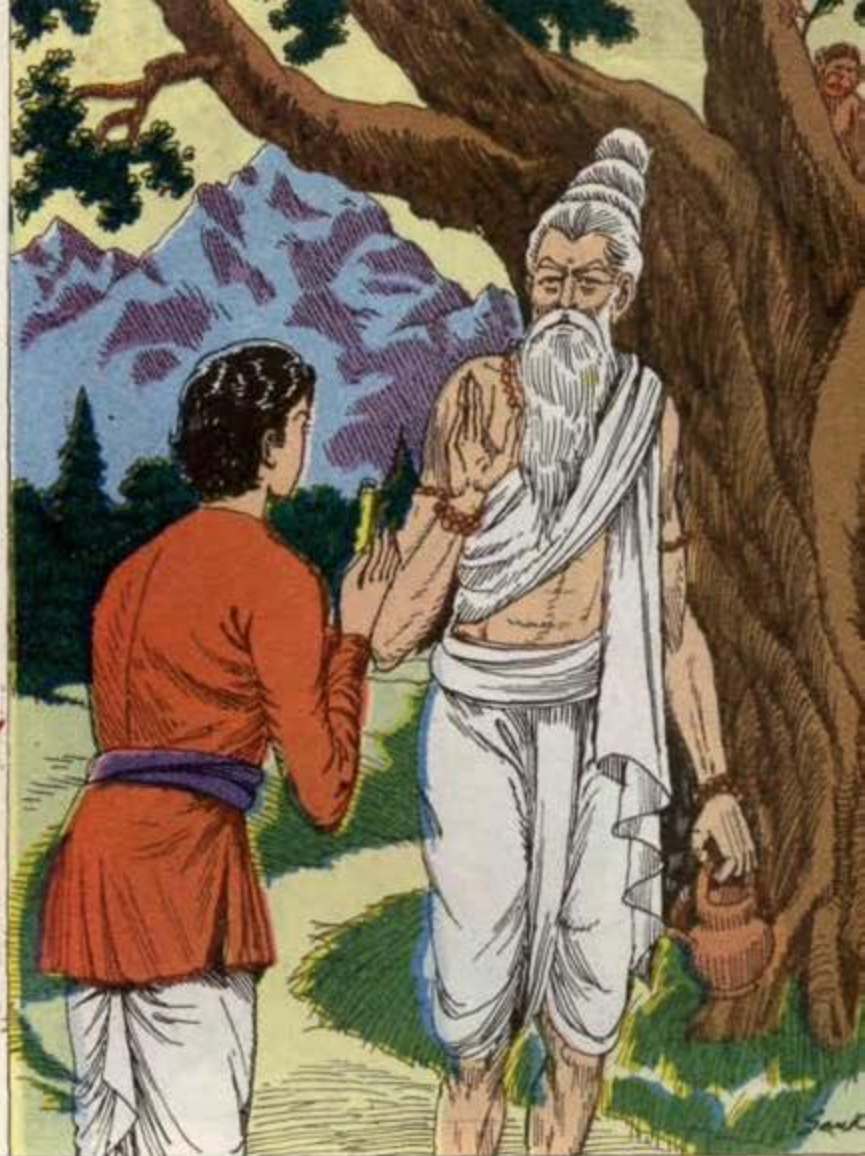
The next day, Saroop Singh packed his lunch and left for the forest. After walking for a long time, he reached a pond deep inside the forest. The pond almost overflowed, and the water was pure and clear. He decided to take rest on the banks of the pond. He could also eat his lunch enjoying the scenery around. He kept his lunch packet on the ground and walked up to the pond to wash his face. He then saw a monkey jumping down from a low branch of a tree and making a beeline to where the lunch packet lay. The monkey had a flute in its hand; it

threw it away and picked the lunch packet and scampered back to the tree.

Saroop Singh was now in a fix. There was no way he could manage to retrieve the lunch packet. He would better give up all efforts to prompt the monkey to give back the packet. He picked up the flute and thought that he was after all not a loser. He got something in return. And it was a cute little flute. But how would he satiate his hunger? He went into the pond drank some water. For the time being, he would forget his hunger.

Saroop walked for a while, carrying the flute in one hand. He saw a *muni* coming from the opposite direction. There was an awe-inspiring aura around him. Saroop stood staring at him. When the muni came near him, the young man prostrated in front of him. He touched the muni's feet with great reverence and then stood up with folded hands.

The muni blessed him with both hands. "You don't have to say anything," said the muni, placing his hands on the shoulder of Saroop. "I'm aware of everything. You've left home to visit the munis and yogis in this region, and get their blessings, haven't you? Good! Good times are ahead for you. The flute in your hands has some divine powers. You must always remember that. When it is played, every listener will fall asleep, except the player. Not only human beings, but



even animals and birds. However, be forewarned. There's no limit to human ambitions. You must control your desires. If you become over-ambitious, it will spell disaster for you. You'll suffer ignominy and agony. Don't forget that!" After saying this, the muni went his way.

Saroop Singh was now happy and contented. He recalled all that the muni had advised him, as he walked back home. Suddenly, he saw a kid trying to flee from a ferocious lion, which was trying to catch the little deer. Saroop was afraid that the animal might jump on him. He climbed a nearby tree and hid himself from the lion. He then remembered the flute. He began playing a note on it. The



music was carried away by the breeze in the forest. Soon, the lion and the kid lay down on the ground and fell asleep! He continued playing the flute for some time. The moment he stopped, the lion and the kid woke up and started running and jumping, the lion trying to catch the deer.

Saroop turned round as he now heard a shriek. He saw a demoness stretching her hands to catch hold of him. "I'm very hungry," she said pathetically. "I must swallow you to appease my hunger. Come on, lie down on the ground. Only then can I tear you to pieces!"

Saroop Singh thought there was some mystery in what she said. "Can't you swallow me while I am stand-

ing?" he asked her. "Need I necessarily have to lie down?"

The demoness let out a heavy sigh. "It's all my fate," she replied. "A muni has cast a curse on me, for a sin I committed. I can swallow only those who lie down."

Saroop took courage in his hands and lay down. He knew he had the power to put the demoness to sleep. He began playing the flute. The demoness grabbed the instrument and blew into it. Saroop Singh immediately plugged his ears with his fingers, so that he would not hear the music and would not go to sleep.

"Why, don't you like my music?" the demoness protested. "All right, let me listen to your music!" She handed him the flute.

Saroop gladly took the flute and played a tune. Sure as anything, the demoness fell down asleep and was soon snoring. He continued to play on it while he slowly stepped back, moving away from the demoness. He thought he had reached a safe distance. But he was wrong. When he stopped playing the flute, she got up and ran after him. "Halt!" she cried. "I can easily overtake you! There's no use running away from me."

Saroop Singh kept on running. He almost collided with some palanquin-bearers, who were coming his way. The demoness now turned her attention to the bearers. Quite a few of them, she thought, and if she could

swallow all of them, then she would not have to go in search of food for some days. She laughed aloud and smiled from one end to the other.

A young woman inside the palanquin drew the curtain and looked outside to see what was happening. Saroop Singh could now see her face and was struck by her beauty. He wished he could make her his wife. Just then he saw the demoness closing in on the palanquin. Only then did the bearers and the young woman realise that she might harm them. Shivering, they all cried aloud. The bearers did not stop and ran as fast as they could, with the demoness following the procession.

Saroop Singh watched all this from a distance. He saw the demoness walking by a dilapidated well. At that very moment he played the flute and its music made her sway on her legs and she fell into the well. As they listened to the music, the palanquin-bearers, too, felt they were about to faint, so they laid the palanquin on the ground and lay down only to fall asleep the next moment. The young woman inside was already asleep.

Saroop Singh stopped his music. Soon thereafter everybody woke up. The demoness opened her eyes and saw that she was inside a well. After he made sure that she could not climb out of the well, Saroop went up to the palanquin. "You need not have any more fear," he told the bearers. "The



demoness will not come out of the well."

They were much relieved. "We're from Sonpuri," they told him. "We're taking our princess to a safe place. Our kingdom is under attack by the ruler of Indrapuri. So, our king had asked us to take her through an escape route along a tunnel. We've now come out of it and we've to rush her to safety. We are grateful to you for your help."

"You don't have to worry about the enemy attack on your kingdom," said Saroop Singh, excitedly. "I can tell your king how he can successfully resist the attack and defeat the enemy. You come along with me."

The palanquin-bearers did not

"We've meeting on a joyous occasion!" said the king. "We're all alive today because of this young man. I had promised to give him whatever he asks for. I shall keep my word." He then turned to Saroop Singh. "May I know what you wish for?"

Everybody picked their ears to listen to Saroop Singh. What would he ask for? Gold coins? Half of the kingdom? A palatial house? The post of commander? And the king was ready to fulfil any of his desires. They all waited with bated breath.

Saroop Singh was all the while contemplating how he would put forth his wish. He was not sure how the king would react. "Go on, don't hesitate, Saroop Singh. Let me hear your wish," the king prompted him re-assuringly.

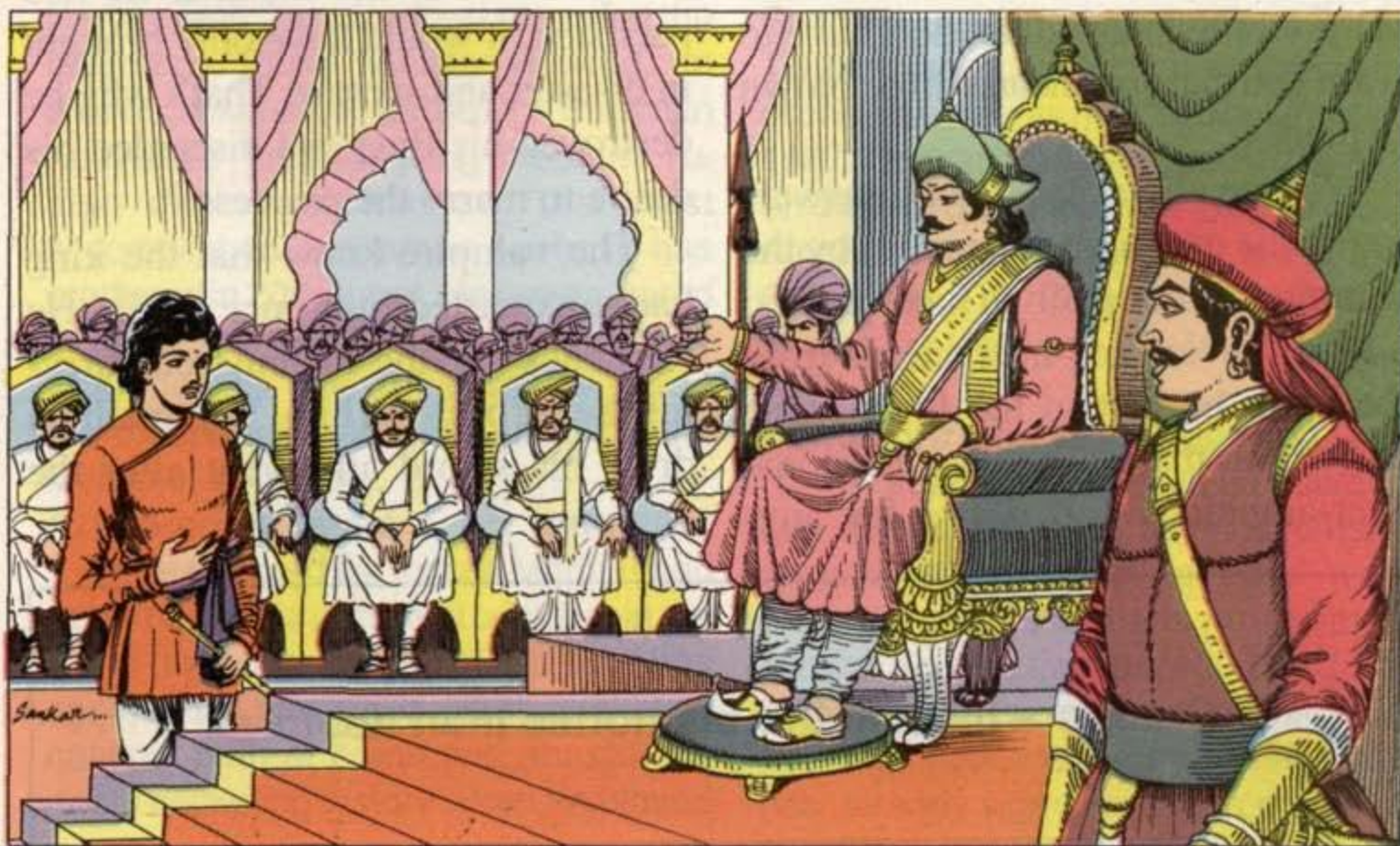
He cleared his throat and said

aloud: "Your majesty, I'll require some time to spell out my desire. May I take one day and come back to you tomorrow?"

The king looked around and then said: "As you wish, Saroop Singh. We shall meet again tomorrow." The court rose.

The next morning, as soon as he got up, Saroop Singh broke his flute into several pieces, threw them all around in his room, and left the place without telling anybody! He did not go back to the king to disclose his wish.

The vampire ended the narration there and turned to King Vikramaditya. "When Saroop Singh saw the Princess Mallika for the first time, he was drawn towards her and decided that if at all he married he would marry only the princess. The





battle was won because of the magical powers of the music from his flute. And he had elicited a promise from the king that he would reward him by giving whatever he asked for. The king had given him such a promise. But he left the kingdom without calling on the king and disclosing his wish. Not only that. He even destroyed the flute that had helped in times of need. Why did he behave like that? O King! If you know the answers and yet prefer to keep silent, do I have to warn you that your head will be blown to pieces?"

Vikramaditya had ready answers for all the questions put to him by the vampire. "Saroop Singh had received a lot of advice and instructions from the muni he met in the forest. One advice was that he should not become over-ambitious and desire for any-

thing that would be above his status in life. True, he won the battle for Sonpuri. But that was because of the magical powers of his flute, and not because of his own prowess. A win due to magical powers is not any real win. This he guessed when he saw the commander remaining silent. He also realised that he did not possess any prowess himself. Therefore, he should not wish to marry the princess, because he had not really deserved her hand. If he had persisted, it would have only brought in disaster and sorrow. That's why he destroyed his flute and discarded his desire to marry the princess."

The vampire knew that the king had outsmarted him once again. He flew back into the ancient tree, carrying the corpse with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.

Creditors have better memories than debtors

SPORTS SNIPPETS

Mecca of cricketers

The best known cricketing legend, Donald Bradman, has a museum named after him and containing his memorabilia. Stage 2 of the museum at Bowral in Australia was opened by Prime Minister John Howard on the 88th birthday of Sir



Donald. But he was not present because of illness. His message sent from Adelaide was read out. His son John, and three members of the Australian team which successfully toured England under captain

Bradman in 1948—Arthur Morris, Neil Harvey, and Sam Loxton—attended the ceremony. Prime Minister Howard, an ardent cricket-lover, called Don Bradman Australia's "greatest living treasure". He also described him as "the most accomplished sportsman Australia has produced in 200 years". He remembered to have first watched Bradman at play when he was only 10 years. He hoped the museum would turn out to be the Mecca of cricketers.

Azharuddin's latest

A new record by India's Mohammad Azharuddin. He is the first cricketer in the world to have played Test matches against all the other eight cricketing nations, both at home and abroad. He made cricketing history when he played

against South Africa in the first Test in the current series at Ahmedabad (November 20-23). He had earlier



played that country only in one-day Internationals. He has by now played against England, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, West Indies, and Zimbabwe. His first test was against England in 1984-85, when he scored a century each in three successive tests—which was a world record. The Ahmedabad match was the 300th Test India was playing. Its first Test was in 1932.

One for Pakistan

On November 13, Pakistan reached a new landmark when it played its 32nd one-day International in a single calendar year. It was playing New Zealand at Sharjah in the Singer Champions Trophy. Till then, the record for maximum number of one-dayers was held by England set in 1987. This record was equalised by India on November 6 when it played South Africa at Mumbai (Bombay) in the Titan Cup Final. The Pakistan-New Zealand tie was the 115th one-day International in 1996.

Bonus prize for world records

The International Amateur Federation has announced that athletes creating new world records at the world championships in Athens next year will receive a bonus award of 100,000 dollars each. Of course, this money will come from a sponsor, with whom the Federation has already signed an agreement.





The value of knowledge

Nagoor was on the sea coast. It used to be often hit by cyclones and storms, resulting in widespread damage to houses and heavy loss of life. Once, during a cyclone and floods, the crops were submerged in water, and most of the houses collapsed and the people had to take shelter in the open, under trees. The village was almost wiped out.

The zamindar of Nagoor was a kind-hearted man. Even in normal times, he would always go out to the help of anyone who would be suffering from some tragedy or other causes for sorrow. He rendered whatever assistance or succour needed most willingly.

He was now a worried man because the place was frequently being hit by natural calamities. He sent for the

astrologer in whom the king of the land had great faith. He looked into the horoscope of the zamindar and certain astrological aspects of the village itself. "Sir, nature comprises five elements like Fire, Sky, Air, Water, and Earth. If any one of them were to be upset, it would cause calamities. In the case of Nagoor, as far as I can see, Air seems to have been provoked. So, you must appease Air. And you know, the son of Air is Hanuman. I would, therefore, suggest that you make an idol of Hanuman and instal it at a prominent place."

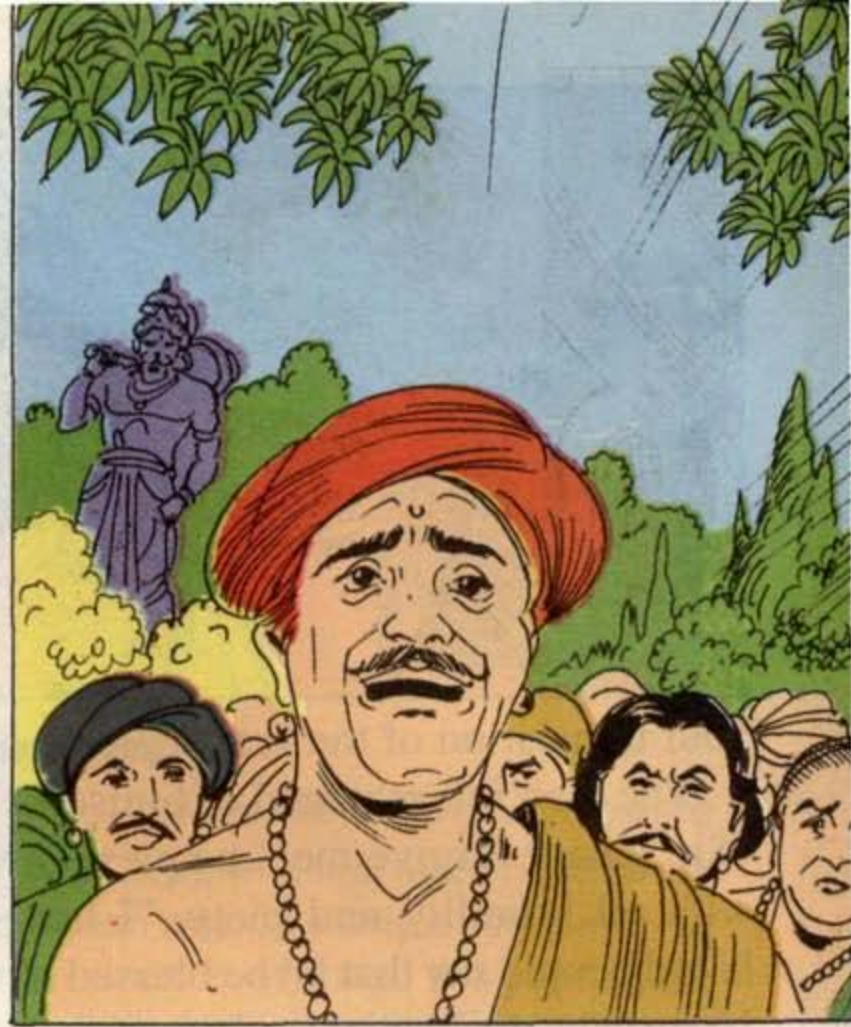
The zamindar was pleased with the astrologer and sent him back after properly rewarding him. Soon afterwards, he called the seniors among the villagers and told them of his decision. Under his directions, an



idol was made and it was ready for installation in an area which by then had been converted into a beautiful garden. He found out an auspicious day and time for installing the idol. The people of the village flocked to the garden, and at the appointed hour, the idol was installed to the great joy of the village folk. It was like a festival. There was entertainment, besides religious discourses. Those who could compose poems recited their poetry. There was a recitation of the portion in the *Ramayana* describing Hanuman, his devotion to Rama, and his exploits.

One villager among the crowd could not appreciate all this. "What is all this nonsense!" he expressed his protest. "Do you think Hanuman will appear before us and shower his blessings? Or remove the curse that has fallen on our village? I had translated the *Ramayana* in our language in poetry form, but that did not prevent my manuscript being flown off during the last cyclone! Hanuman did not come and save the manuscript! So, why all this *tamasha*?" He really gave vent to his frustration over the loss he had sustained.

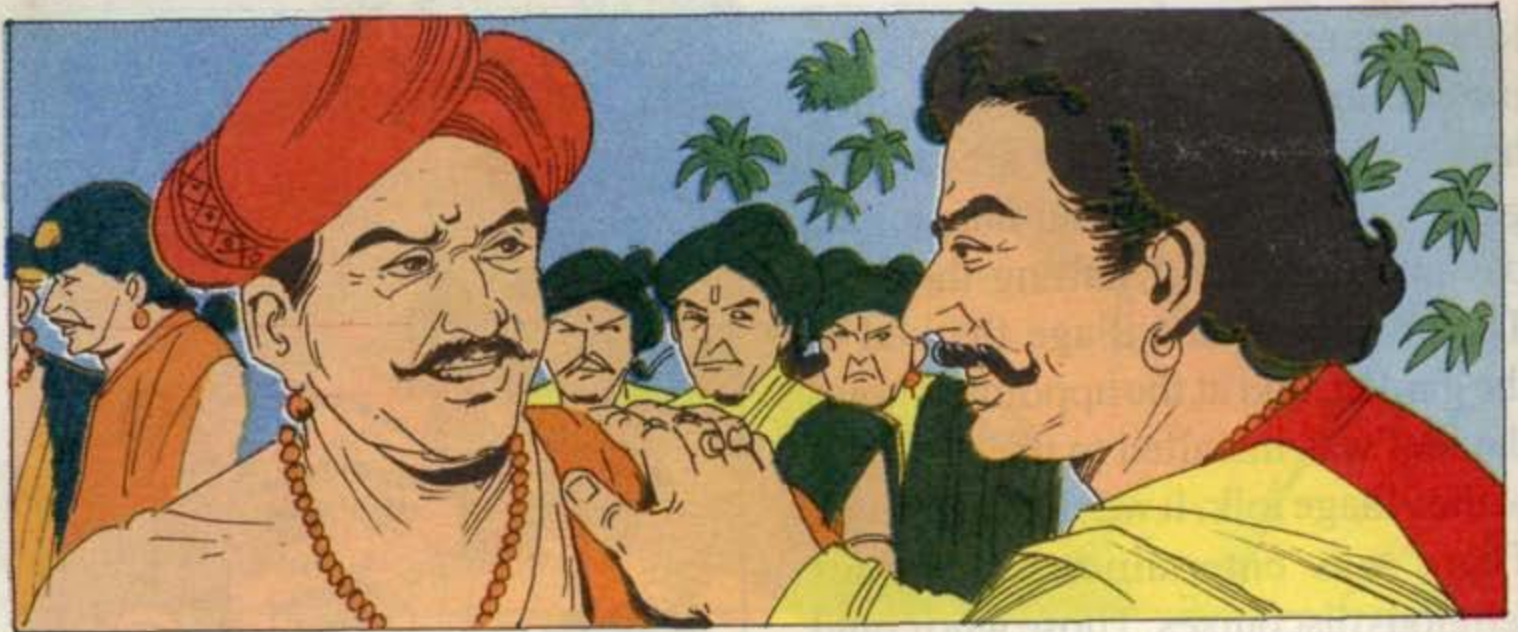
Those who listened to him, however, thought that he was being blasphemous. And that, too, on an auspicious occasion. His behaviour could not be tolerated. He should suffer punishment. "He is an atheist!"



said one of the seniors. "He should be prevented from saying anything more blasphemous." They all shouted at him. Some even advanced towards him to beat him.

However, the zamindar intervened. He called the villager by his side and tried to pacify him. "What you said is more or less true. Nature has its own way of blessing people or punishing them. Nobody can prevent its ways. But, let me ask you something. When you translated the *Ramayana*, did you do it with devotion? Try to remember. If you had done it with devotion to Lord Rama and his greatest devotee, Hanuman, no cyclone would have blown off your effort. Anyway, don't worry. Try once more. Let us have





your translation of the great epic."

The man felt ashamed of himself. "Sir, please forgive me!" he pleaded with all humility and piety. "I had heard people say that I'd be blessed if I translated the *Ramayana*. I expressed my feelings only because I lost my manuscript of several days toil in the cyclone. In fact, all the five elements of Nature are part and parcel of the great epic."

The people could not understand what he was saying. Fortunately, an eminent poet, who had been invited to the installation ceremony, was present on the occasion. He turned to the zamindar and said: "Sir, he seems to be an intellectual. What he said

was, the five elements of Nature are merged in the character of Hanuman. He is the son of air or Vayu. He travelled along the sky and water and reached Lanka where he met Sita, who is the daughter of earth. He later invoked fire and destroyed the city of Lanka. What a noble thought!"

The zamindar was overjoyed when he heard this explanation from the poet. "All of us have the habit of reading the *Ramayana*, but we never understood such meanings in the lines. I am sure this man is a knowledgeable person. He deserves to be rewarded!"

The people assembled there cheered the man and their leader, the zamindar.

- Behind an able man, there are always other able men.
- A wise man knows everything; a shrewd one, everybody.
- Adversity introduces a man to himself



People speak of the 'Lost Continent'. Where was it?

-Lalitha Maheshwari, Bangalore

It was the Greek philosopher, Plato (427-348 B.C.), who first mentioned of the lost continent. According to him, the Atlantic Ocean was originally a continent. He called it Atlantis, which was once a powerful nation. It offended the gods by its independence and disrespect. They therefore, took revenge on the nation. It was then submerged. Some historians think, it was destroyed in an earthquake about 9000 B.C. They called it Thera Santorin or Lost Atlantis, which remains a legendary area.

What is 'Esperanto'?

-Vinu Abraham, Mattancheri

Esperanto is described as an international language invented by Ludovic Zamenhof (1859-1917), a Jew who was born in a place on the frontier of Poland and Russia. He thought that language barrier was one reason for differences between countries. He conceived of a common language which can easily be learnt by people anywhere in the world and described it in his book '*Internacia Lingvo*' (1887), which was two years later translated into English as "Dr. Esperanto means a person who hopes. In 1908 was founded the Universala Esperanto-Asocio, with headquarters in Rotterdam, to promote the language. It is now claimed that more than 8 million people speak this language.

What is the origin of the word 'metre'?

-Vikram Mohindru, Bhopal

The word has come from the Greek **metron**, meaning a measure. It was adopted as a unit of measurement for the first time in France in 1790. It was used to measure distance. After the French Revolution, the new government wanted to introduce perfect measurements for distances and weights. After careful study, scholars came upon **metre**, which equals one ten-millionth of a quarter of the length around the same time **gram** for weights and **litre** for measuring liquids.

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



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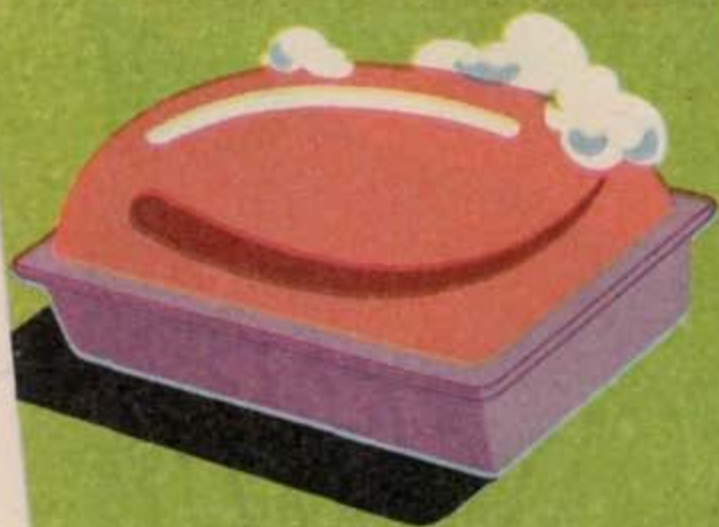
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